

The Report on Law Enforcement

The Nation

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Wednesday, January 22, 1930



Unemployment in England

by John A. Hobson

Clemenceau the Destroyer

by Robert Dell

John Dewey's "The Quest for Certainty"

reviewed by Henry Hazlitt

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THE SUPREME COURT of the United States seems determined to drive us willy-nilly into public ownership and operation of public utilities. In a long series of decisions it has been making us pay more and more dearly for the privilege of having utility services furnished by private companies instead of providing them ourselves. The latest case is that of the Baltimore street railways, decided on January 6. The court held that under existing conditions a return of 6.26 per cent on the present value of the property used by the company is so inadequate as to constitute confiscation, adding: "It is not certain that rates securing a return of $7\frac{1}{2}$ or even 8 per cent on the value of the property would not be necessary to avoid confiscation." The company claimed rates yielding 7.44 per cent, asserting that even such rates were inadequate, and the court decided: "Upon the present record, we are of opinion that to enforce rates producing less than this would be confiscatory." This is not all. Asserting "the settled rule of this court that the rate base is present value" the court held that depreciation also must be figured on present value and not on cost, thus raising even farther the rates necessary to avoid confiscation. Finally, it declined on technical grounds to exclude from the value claimed as a basis for rate-making purposes easements in the streets valued at \$5,000,000. In other

words, the city, having allowed the corporation the use of the streets, must now pay it a 7.44 per cent return on the estimated value of the privilege thus given it. The whole spirit of the majority opinion is summed up in this observation: "The fundamental principle to be observed is that the property of a public utility, although devoted to the public service and impressed with a public interest, is still private property; and neither the corpus of that property nor the use thereof constitutionally can be taken for a compulsory price which falls below the measure of just compensation. One is confiscation no less than the other."

THE DECISION brought vigorous dissents from Justices Brandeis (Justice Holmes concurring) and Stone. In his dissenting opinion Justice Brandeis declared that the estimated present return of 6.26 per cent is in fact much larger if the rules which he deems applicable are followed; that is, if the easements are excluded from the rate base, the return becomes 6.70 per cent, and if the depreciation charge is computed according to ordinary business rules, instead of following the doctrine now laid down by the court, it rises to 7.78 per cent. He points out that franchises are not included in valuing plant for rate-making purposes and that to call the company's rights in the streets easements makes them none the less franchises. On the basis of both history and logic he makes what seems to us an impregnable case in favor of basing the depreciation charge on cost and not on present value, as was done in reaching the majority decision. The practical result of the rule laid down by the majority concerning depreciation is suggested in the last paragraph of Justice Stone's dissenting opinion:

To say that the present price level is necessarily the true measure of future replacement cost is to substitute for a relevant fact, which I should have thought ought to have been established as are other facts, a rule of law which seems not to follow from *Smyth v. Ames*, and to be founded neither upon experience nor expert opinion and to be unworkable in practice.

To take present value rather than prudent investment as the rate base is a principle likely in a period of falling prices to prove disastrous to the companies themselves, and every student recognizes that it makes effective control of rates impossible. The present decision goes farther than any preceding one in the application of this mistaken principle. It works to the present advantage of the companies, but, as the present case indicates, it makes the public pay handsomely.

TO BE THE SON of a great father is not easy, but the same uncompromising honesty, courage, and genius for grueling hard work that made his father at once the most feared and the best loved man in Washington have marked the Senatorial career of Robert M. La Follette up to this time. His appointment to the powerful Committee on Finance, in the teeth of the bitter opposition of the Republican Old Guard, is an event well worthy of note. It means a powerful reinforcement to the liberal forces at this strategic point in the Senate battle line, and it will make it vastly more

difficult for Senator Smoot and his cohorts to override opposition in the committee and sacrifice the interests of the public at large to those of their big business friends, as they did in writing the tariff schedules now under fire on the floor of the Senate. Senator La Follette's appointment, further, is testimony to the growing power of that little group of honest and independent Progressives in the Senate whose sturdy battle for popular rights against predatory privilege of various kinds has been the most heartening feature of American public life during the years of sodden Coolidge prosperity.

BOSTON'S WATCH AND WARD Society has suffered three defections since its last encounter with "obscurity," which was described by Gardner Jackson in our issue of January 15. The society won its case against the Dunster House Bookshop, to be sure, but the fact that the bookdealer had been persuaded to obtain and sell the guilty book by one of the society's paid procurers was a little more than even Boston could endure. The judge who presided, the attorney who prosecuted, and most of the Boston press attacked the society and its methods with a fierceness which, added to general public ridicule, penetrated the righteous armor of that snooper-dreadnought, the Watch and Ward. Three distinguished Bostonians, Professor Julian Coolidge, Bishop Lawrence, and Dr. David Scannell, have resigned from the board of directors. According to a report issued by the society on January 13, none of these resignations was the result of disapproval of the society's tactics in the Dunster House case—which, of course, makes them at this particular moment most inopportune. At any rate, the society seems to be perilously near to going on the rocks. We wish it the worst of luck.

TWO PARTICULARLY odious assaults by Negroes on white women were recently committed in the city of Baltimore. Since Baltimore is a civilized community, civilized even on the Negro question, neither of the offenders was taken out and subjected to the loathsome caprices of a mob. Both will be dealt with swiftly and justly under the law which governs their offenses. The *Baltimore Sun*, in commenting editorially on the matter, quotes with approval the resolution drawn up by various Negro societies in the city, denouncing recent crimes committed by members of their race and promising their whole-hearted support in suppressing such crimes in the future. We recommend the Baltimore attitude on the race question to the sovereign State of Florida, which admits to four of the ten lynchings which took place last year. It is encouraging to note, in considering the figures on lynching, that in twenty-seven cases lynchings were prevented by the prompt and courageous action of officers of the law, and that twenty-four of these were in Southern States. We can only hope that some of the twenty-four took place in Florida.

THE SECOND HAGUE CONFERENCE on the Young plan evidently thought to clear the way for a consideration of the proposed international bank by first disposing of a number of less important matters. Some of these proved unexpectedly troublesome. The Germans, who haggled over various details until Mr. Snowden, British Chancellor of the Exchequer, warned them to stop objecting and either take the Young plan or go on under the Dawes plan,

made a great point of the proposal that payments should be made on the fifteenth of the month instead of on the first, and did their best to escape from the possible imposition of sanctions in case of default. On this latter point they found a weighty argument in the recent treaty with the United States for the separate payment of war claims and the costs of the American army of occupation, the treaty saying nothing about sanctions and specifically recognizing German good faith; but the other creditors were not ready to give up the right to compel payment if necessary. When the bank question was finally reached, Dr. Schacht, president of the Reichsbank, announced that his bank would not subscribe to stock in the proposed bank because of changes which had been made in the Young report, but his opposition, it was thought, would not prevent the establishment of the bank.

LABOR CONTRACTS SHOULD BE BROKEN, according to Charles G. Wood, Commissioner of Conciliation in the United States Department of Labor, if the laborer who is party to the agreement turns out to be a Communist. The La Valle Shoe Company of New York City entered into an agreement with the Independent Shoe Workers Union, in April, 1929, under which it was agreed, among other things, that the company should employ only members of the union and that there should be no strike or lockout while the agreement lasted. In August Mr. Wood wrote to the company advising them that Fred B. Biedenkapp, general manager of the union, was a Communist and "a very active enemy of our form of government, municipal, State, and federal," and stating that "it is desirable that employers who voluntarily or involuntarily sign an agreement purporting to bind them to recognize this Communist organization and give employment only to persons belonging to it withdraw forthwith from participating in it." Called into court as a witness in a case involving an application for an injunction against a strike which had occurred in the La Valle shop Wood admitted the authorship of the letter and asserted that his superiors knew of it and had never repudiated it. Mr. Justice Callahan, before whom the application was heard, dismissed the case with the remark that if the Wood letter "advised the plaintiff to break a solemn contract because of the political views of the other contracting party" the court "disagrees with that advice." All honor to the court for rebuking another display of government insolence.

MAHATMA GANDHI drew up the resolution, passed on December 31 by the Indian National Congress in session at Lahore, which rejected the offer of a round-table conference to discuss dominion status and declared for complete independence from Great Britain, an end to be achieved if necessary by a program of civil disobedience and boycott of the English government of India. Less than two weeks later Gandhi made two statements, one printed in his magazine, *Young India*, the other released by the North American Newspaper Alliance. He said that "the independence resolution need frighten nobody. I had repeatedly declared that for me, as for all other congressmen, dominion status could mean only virtual independence." Moreover, he said that the Lahore resolution did not rule out the possibility of a conference with the British. "If the British government invites the congress to a conference to discuss and frame, not any scheme, but a scheme definitely for an independent gov-

ernment . . . I take it the congress leaders will gladly respond." Gandhi stated also that in his opinion India was not ready for a campaign of civil disobedience. Such a campaign at this time would inevitably end in violence. In such an event Gandhi, according to his principles, would be compelled to withdraw his leadership and his withdrawal would certainly mean complete failure and more violence. Gandhi wants freedom for India, whether it is called dominion status or independence. He is willing to wait, and he will not refuse to consider new offers from Great Britain.

AND NOW RUSSIA has gone communist. When the first period of military communism came to an end with the introduction of the New Economic Policy in 1921, critics rightly enough saw economic necessity asserting itself and calling private trade again into existence; wrongly enough they proceeded accordingly to write the obituary of communism. It was less than three years before the Nepmen received their first check, and from that day to this the government has been drawing the rope tighter and tighter about their necks. As the economic situation has improved, the Communists have grown more communistic and they are driving swiftly forward with their five-year program, apparently confident that the people can and will stand the strain. Now come dispatches from the well-informed correspondent Walter Duranty, reporting the astounding decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party that the grain-producing areas are to be completely collectivized by the spring of 1932, instead of 20 per cent of them being collectivized by 1933, as originally contemplated in the five-year program. Mr. Duranty also reports the demand of the Moscow Committee of the party for the prompt "liquidation" of the private traders. The Communists are proceeding with their usual directness to put into effect the thoroughgoing communist policy recently announced by Stalin. Whether they are going to succeed or not is a question to which they themselves do not yet seem to have a confident answer.

THE MANAGERS of the National Automobile Show report that sales at the show of most makes of cars were higher than last year, and that for a number of cars the average increase was slightly more than 10 per cent. Two months ago few persons either outside or inside of the automobile trade would have dared to predict such a result. If anything seemed certain then it was that the unparalleled stock-market collapse would bring a drastic reduction in all "luxury" buying. Yet the General Motors Corporation soon reported that its dealers had sold 90,871 cars to users in November, a decrease of only 539 cars from November of the year before. While December sales show a falling off, much of this decrease is attributed to the fact that numerous changes in car models have led to a brief postponement of buying. In considering the effect of the stock-market collapse on "luxury" sales, it must be kept in mind that the October-November crash came after an unprecedented advance in stock-market prices during the preceding months of 1929, and that there has already been a substantial recovery; at present the average level of prices is only about 10 per cent below the level at this time last year. This decline is not negligible, but neither is it necessarily a presage of national disaster!

PITY THE CARNEGIE FOUNDATION for the Advancement of Teaching and the professors who are its uncertain beneficiaries! It will be recalled that the foundation, having in 1922 adopted rules which appeared to assure to professors in accepted institutions certain rates of pensions or retiring allowances, found in 1929 that it had failed to cut the coat according to the cloth and that the expected payments must be considerably reduced. The latest report of the president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, just issued, tells how the corporation had to come to the aid of the foundation to the extent of providing nine annual grants of \$600,000 each out of which professors at the age of seventy are to benefit to the extent of \$500 a year. Incidentally, the report reveals that the corporation has granted over \$20,800,000 since 1911 in aid of retiring allowances for professors. What the foundation and the corporation between them have been unable to do the accepted colleges and universities must now do for themselves, and the report notes that some forty-nine institutions, representing collectively more than 75 per cent of the pensionables, have either made the needed provision or are trying to devise ways and means of doing so.

IT IS PLEASANT to welcome again to this country Mary Agnes Hamilton, British writer and lecturer, to whose name the magic letters "M.P." are now appended. An alternate British delegate to the Assembly of the League of Nations last year, Mrs. Hamilton made her debut in the House of Commons early in December. Her maiden speech, which the *London Nation and Athenaeum* declares "gave evidence of a clear and powerful intelligence," to be applauded not merely by comparison with other maiden speeches "but by Front-Bench standards," was immediately followed by one by Mr. Runciman, a veteran of the House, who not only praised her for her achievement, but paid her the greater compliment of analyzing her argument and testing it step by step. Certainly the women in the British Parliament are winning more laurels than the corresponding group of members of the American House of Representatives. This is, however, in large part due to the opportunities for training in debate offered by the House of Commons.

UNQUESTIONABLY the greatest living American humorist is the make-up man of the *New York Times*. The other day Mr. Calvin Coolidge, of Northampton, Massachusetts, who, it will be recalled, was at one time President of the United States, but who has now gone into life insurance, addressed a few burning words to a gathering of insurance executives at St. Petersburg, Florida. "The advocates of defeat have often asserted that the only economic salvation law is communism," he declared, "the habit of Presidential oratory apparently reasserting itself; "but the independent spirit of the American has constantly replied that the individual is sovereign, that private ownership of property is a sovereign right, and he is able to take care of his economic destiny." And the naughty make-up joker put into a box at the top of the next column but one: "Ninety-eight people out of every 100 are financially incompetent, Dr. S. S. Huebner, professor of Insurance and Commerce at the University of Pennsylvania, told Toronto underwriters in convention today." Poor team-work somewhere among these insurance fellows!

The Issues at London

ON January 7, two days before the American delegation to the naval conference at London sailed from New York, President Hoover issued a statement in which he expressed the hope "that the people of our country will cooperate in the progress of the conference by patience, encouragement, and freedom from criticism." This unusual appeal followed a frank admission that "the difficulties of finding a basis" for "actual reduction in naval burdens of the world" that will be "acceptable to five different nations are great, but they are not insuperable," that "the technology and the complexities of the problem are such that we need hope for no immediate and quick results," and that "to complete the conference in three or four months would be in itself a great accomplishment, and we should not expect any hurried conclusions."

Mr. Hoover's appeal for patience, hopefulness, and an open mind on the part of the American public was doubtless called out by his recognition of the unexpectedly complicated situation which the conference will have to meet. The London conference will have before it two radically different proposals for dealing with the question of reducing and limiting naval armaments. The original Anglo-American program of Mr. Hoover and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald contemplated a direct approach to the question through an agreement between those two Powers to establish a parity of cruiser strength by limiting both the total cruiser tonnage and the number of cruisers which each country should maintain. A difference of opinion developed regarding the terms of this adjustment and a matter of three cruisers or 30,000 tons remains to be apportioned; but it was understood that, in order to attain parity, Great Britain would be willing to reduce the number of its cruisers from about seventy, the present number, to fifty, and that the United States should be entitled to the same number even though, in view of its present disparity in cruiser strength, it should decide to build up to the limit of fifty and thereby make parity actual as well as theoretical.

It very soon became apparent, even before France, Italy, and Japan were invited to take part in a five-Power conference at which the Anglo-American agreement should be discussed, that the question of naval reduction was not so simple. It was pointed out that naval strength does not depend upon cruisers alone but involves consideration of other types of vessels, especially battleships and submarines. Intimations that Great Britain and the United States would like to see the submarine abolished were met by statements that the other three Powers held the submarine to be essential to their defense, while Japan injected a further element into the discussion by expressing informally a desire for a larger allotment of cruiser tonnage than the Washington conference had given it. It was learned that Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Hoover had also discussed the questions of freedom of the seas and the British naval bases in America, only to find that on these points they were not agreed. The net result of some weeks of criticism, explanation, and rejoinder was to leave the United States and Great Britain still committed to parity in cruisers, but to widen the scope

of the conference so as to include other types of vessels.

To this Anglo-American proposal France presently opposed an entirely different thesis. Naval reduction or limitation, it was pointed out, however desirable in itself, is only one aspect of the general question of armaments, which includes armaments on land and in the air as well as on the sea. Any general agreement must take account of the special needs of each country for security; France, for example, with two seacoasts, an extensive land frontier, and a colonial empire second only to that of Great Britain, has need of an army as well as of a navy, and the nature of the one force is affected by the nature of the other. Moreover, since the League of Nations is bound by the Covenant to prepare a plan for general disarmament, France insisted that whatever decisions were reached at London ought to be regarded as provisional only, dependent for their validity upon their harmony with the League plan. Instead of segregating the naval problems of the five Powers, the French thesis called for the treatment of naval reduction in the light of a general problem whose solution had been, by international agreement, assigned to the League.

These, in substance, are the opposing views which will confront the conference when it assembles. Out of the maze of affirmations, denials, qualifications, explanations, and arguments which the two proposals have engendered it is possible to distinguish a few points about which debate seems likely to center. Mr. Hoover wants an agreement that will bring about actual reduction of naval armaments and put an end to competitive building. Mr. MacDonald also wants the same practical outcome. Both Mr. Hoover and Mr. MacDonald appear to be ready to discuss the reduction or limitation of all classes of naval vessels.

France, on the other hand, unless it makes a complete change of front, may be expected to keep its own special needs, the League of Nations, and the general armament question clearly before the conference, and to join with Italy and Japan in defending the submarine. Japan has not abandoned its purpose to secure, if possible, a larger cruiser tonnage and Italy declines to accept a naval limitation inferior to that of France, but it is believed that Italy will support France in its proposal of a Mediterranean Locarno which would regulate the naval forces of those two Powers and Great Britain in the Mediterranean. The Department of State has already taken the position that a naval treaty, if one is made at London, cannot be considered as provisional and that unless all five of the Powers agree there will be no treaty at all, but Secretary Stimson has also intimated that the United States has no intention of embarrassing the League.

Mr. Hoover is right in emphasizing the supreme importance of the London conference. A failure to bring about some substantial measure of naval reduction and limitation at London would be nothing short of a calamity for the cause of world peace. The difficulties are great, but they are not insuperable. The hope of success, as Mr. Hoover has said, lies in "the importance and the gravity of the occasion" and the good-will with which the delegates approach their task.

The Report on Law Enforcement

STAMPEDED by loud political cries in both Houses of Congress and by reproachful editorials in most of the newspapers of the country, Mr. Hoover's Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement has issued a preliminary report of its findings to date. The commission was chosen and put to work because of a widespread notion that certain laws in the United States were not being enforced; therefore the main contention of the present report—that certain laws in the United States are not being enforced—is not exactly news. The report as a whole contains little except promises; it is unfortunate that political pressure elicited them so far ahead of performance. The commission announces division of the subject into eleven parts with a committee for each; it promises studies of the most careful and thoroughgoing kind on each part; it has appointed for each committee a group of experts of irreproachable experience, judgment, and honorable intent. This report, when it is finally made, should be a report worth reading. There is, of course, the danger that it will be so long, so detailed, so exhaustive that nobody will read it except a few experts. But there is no reason for quarreling with a report merely because it is too long. There is need for just such an exhaustive study as the present one promises to be.

Meanwhile life goes on. The law continues to be unenforced, the judicial enforcement machinery continues to be inadequate to enforce it. Law-enforcement officials continue to be corruptible, prisoners continue to be ill-used in our courts and in our jails—and the "noble experiment" of prohibition continues, in its many and varied manifestations, to make us as a nation the subject for polite amusement to other nations of the earth. We believe—we dare to admit it even before we see the commission's report on the subject—that the relations between our police departments and our criminals are scandalous, that the third degree is a crying shame, that the congestion of our courts makes the orderly processes of justice impossible, that our penal institutions are relics of a more barbarous age than the present. But we are inclined to believe also that—in spite of the commission's warning that since frontier days we have always been a lawless people—if it were possible to get down to cases on the subject of "American lawlessness," "official lawlessness," and all the similar loose terms that have been flung about during the last few years, we should see one very significant thing: "American lawlessness," in its present manifestation, means that many thousands of American citizens refuse to obey one law; "official lawlessness" means that many hundreds of American officials neglect to enforce that law. It may be possible, if we spend money enough and build jails enough and can find a sufficient number of incorruptible officials, to enforce the prohibition laws. But we shall never even begin to enforce them until we have government officers, from the highest down, who are first of all willing to admit that the question of whether or not those laws can be enforced, and whether or not they will be enforced, are the major questions before the American people today.

In view of the foregoing, it is pertinent to examine the findings of Mr. Hoover's commission on the subject of pro-

hibition—one of the eleven sections into which it has divided its report. The first recommendation of the commission is to transfer the agencies for the enforcement of prohibition from the Treasury Department to the Department of Justice. The work of investigation and prosecution for violation of the prohibition statutes has nothing properly to do with the business of internal revenue or the granting of permits for the legal manufacture and sale of spirits. The second recommendation of the commission's report, for the codification of existing legislation on the subject of prohibition, also seems eminently reasonable. So with the commission's third recommendation, provision for making so-called padlock injunctions more effective. A padlock does no good if the owner of the premises so treated can move next door, or can transfer the lease to his partner or his brother who immediately proceeds to operate a speakeasy and must be proceeded against in the same way as was the original offender. The fourth recommendation offers some complications. It is, in brief, for the definition by Congress of a class of minor infractions of the prohibition statutes which may be proceeded against without the necessity of an indictment by a grand jury, but may be heard before a United States Commissioner in the manner of an ordinary magistrate's court. If the offender pleads guilty, the judge may sentence him on the spot—to not more than \$500 fine or more than six months in jail; if he pleads not guilty, the judge may render judgment which may be appealed by the offender, who may then demand and receive a jury trial.

This, of course, involves first the passage of certain legislation by Congress. But as Congress is in a melting mood just now with respect to enforcement of the prohibition laws, this may not present any difficulties. It involves also, however, granting to the district attorney the right to determine whether a case comes under the class of minor infractions or whether the offender should be subjected to indictment and jury trial. This is a rather large amount of discretion in a very controversial issue. Moreover, it must be remembered that if the purpose of the proposal is to expedite justice in minor offenses, thus relieving the federal courts of the burden which prohibition has imposed upon them, any offender has the right to demand the full process of law in his case, and, more perplexing still, the most vigorous champions of prohibition will hesitate to admit, for any purpose however laudable, that such a thing as a minor infraction exists. The whole tendency, of which the Jones law is an outstanding example, has been in the opposite direction.

It is evident that some very lively debates will take place throughout the country as a result of the law-enforcement commission's report. But the report will do one very valuable thing, whatever the value of its various recommendations: it will focus the wandering attention of American politicians and Americans as a whole on the necessity for an immediate, disinterested, and whole-hearted attempt to enforce the prohibition law. Such an attempt has never been made. We have laughed at the law, we have wept over it, we have disregarded it, we have invoked it as the greatest blessing of mankind. Now let us enforce it—if we can.

Air Monopoly Again

THE omniscience of Owen D. Young, alas, has been seriously questioned by two of his associated gods of the big-business pantheon. In fact, that mocking Hermes, Newcomb Carlton, president of the Western Union Company, testifying before the Interstate Commerce Committee of the Senate, goes so far as to say: "In respect to Mr. Young's views on international communications, with all respect, of course, I put them in the class with any advice he might be moved to give to nursing mothers." This verges perilously close on *lèse majesté*, not to say *lèse divinité*. Both Mr. Carlton and Ellery W. Stone, president of the Kolster Radio Corporation and the Federal Telegraph Company, challenge sharply Mr. Young's reasons for wanting a monopoly in the field of international communications.

In our issue of December 25, in commenting on Mr. Young's testimony and approving his views on the advantages of unification as opposed to competition in the communications industry, we pointed out that both he and General Harbord put forward nationalistic considerations as the basis of their appeal for monopoly in the international field. Mr. Young besought unification "in the national interest." The merger of British communications in intimate relations with the British government, it was suggested, was a serious menace to our companies and to us, and must be met by a union of American companies (under government control, of course). Now this is precisely the same kind of nonsense that American oil companies, at that time in sharp rivalry with the Royal Dutch-Shell, were putting forward in 1920. Mr. Carlton characterizes Mr. Young's presentation of the menace of the British communications merger as "one of the most fantastic bogies ever dressed up in my experience," and he goes on: "The British merger doesn't present the slightest menace to anyone. Right now the Radio Corporation of America and the Western Union hold the British merger in the hollow of their hand."

Replying to Mr. Carlton, General Harbord, who echoes Mr. Young's views, appeals to us "to maintain the present enviable position of our country in both radio and cables, and to aspire to their combined leadership against the world," and urges that we "must not cut the ground from under those who are fighting America's battles on the frontiers of world-wide communication." Frontiers of world-wide bunk! Mr. Young wants to sell the communications system of the Radio Corporation of America, valued by Mr. Stone at \$15,000,000 at the outside, to the International Telephone and Telegraph Company for \$97,000,000. The law of the United States (a foolish law, in our judgment) stands in the way. Mr. Young beseeches us to sanction his trade in order to save American business and the American people from God knows what disasters in future. His business rivals take the stand and show up his appeal to the national interest for exactly what it is, a means to put across a business deal worth perhaps eighty millions to his stockholders. If Mr. Young wants to make such a deal, let him not try to persuade himself and us that he is thereby saving his fellow-countrymen from imminent dangers.

We reiterate our judgment of the essential soundness of Mr. Young's view that a unified, intelligently planned

communications system offers great possibilities of economy by comparison with the duplication and higgledy-piggledy wastefulness of competition in this field; and at the same time we again point to Mr. Young as a striking example of the danger of accepting business men as safe guides in public policy in matters where their own interests are involved. Business deals ought to go about naked, not dressed up in political clothes. Business men like Mr. Young are extraordinarily naive in arraying them in such habiliments, and peoples go to war because they look at the clothes and not at the unshapely forms inside the clothes. In public affairs give us the leadership of impractical theorists.

Our Imperial Burden

NOT all the serious thinking and good writing in the newspaper world are done in the offices of the big metropolitan papers, nor do the small-town dailies live wholly on boiler plate. In the Urbana (Illinois) *Daily Courier* we note two recent editorials on American imperialism that deserve quotation. Under the caption *Destiny Rides on Its Way* the editor, A. T. Burrows, writes:

The struggling nationettes of the Caribbean Sea, of Central America, and even of South America, look upon the Colossus of the North, and plainly see their doom written in letters of fire. . . .

Latin America is frankly incredulous as to the selfishness of our motives. Our explanations to her do not explain. . . .

The policy they decry is not one thought out by careful schemers, but is simply the inevitable march of destiny. Incompetence must fall before competence. The superior will prevail over the inferior.

Another day, under the heading *Look Out, World*, the same writer says:

It is sad but true that the world doesn't want to be reformed. It prefers its own vices to the obvious and undisputed virtues imposed on it from without—no matter what that source might be.

The Haitians just want to be Haitians. . . . They do not want to be reformed. They do not care to be solvent. They are not asking for hard roads, or school houses, or fur coats. Our mission among them is to compel them to do something they do not want to do; and very properly they resent it. . . .

Some day we will learn that it is not possible to impose benefits on an unwilling and objecting recipient. Some day we will learn, what others already know, that "the white man's burden" means nothing more or less than the domination of the world—by persuasion if possible—by force if gentler means fail.

We have taken up the burden. Look out, World.

We are by no means wholly in agreement with the editor of the *Courier*. In particular, we long ago became extremely suspicious of the march of destiny, because we always found someone who seemed determined to make destiny march that way. But we are delighted to find this striking example of the serious attention being given to our international responsibilities in some of the smaller newspaper offices of the country.

It Seems to Heywood Broun

THE doctrine of papal infallibility is a subtle one, I'm told, and does not mean that the titular head of the Catholic church can never be wrong in any opinion. I trust that this is true, for it will be unfortunate if the latest message from Rome about education is accepted by all Catholics without criticism or question. After all, many of the points touched upon are distinctly secular. It seems to me that in such matters even the wise head of a great church could be wrong. Moreover, the field of education is wide and it is difficult for the closest student of the subject to advance and defend generalizations. In recent years, at any rate, the present Pope has hardly been in a position to pay close personal attention to American school conditions. I do not think that anyone familiar with the field would speak quite so harshly of co-education.

The Pope, to be sure, is interested chiefly in the sort of education which will best promote allegiance and fidelity to the church which he leads. Yet even admitting this it seems to me that the Pontiff has some misconceptions and that the educational theories which he attacks constitute no danger whatsoever to the faith which he upholds. According to the encyclical:

The sexes were made distinct by the Creator. They complement each other reciprocally owing to their diversity, which must therefore be maintained in education, with the necessary separation proportional to the various ages and circumstances. These principles must be applied in all schools, especially during the most delicate and decisive period of growth, namely adolescence, and especially, also, in gymnastic exercises and sports for girls with due regard for their Christian modesty.

I have only seen the newspaper reports and it may be that the Pope's proclamation makes a clearer case if read in its entirety. Frankly, this extract does not seem to me to make much sense. It seems to say that God created two sexes; which nobody will deny. From this accepted fact the leap is made that they must be separated in the schools. But why? Little boys remain little boys and little girls can still be feminine even though they happen to have shared a class room while hearing how Washington crossed the Delaware. Anybody who feels that co-education promotes looseness of thought and deed has made an imperfect study of the subject. Someone might rise at this point to ask me to qualify as an expert on the subject of education before I undertake to criticize the theories of the Pope. Unfortunately I cannot. But after all I did go to Horace Mann High School, which was co-educational, while the Pope, I assume, went to some separatist school as is the custom of his church and country. Obviously, one of the Pontiff's chief worries is about the activity of girls in athletics. Here he is dealing with a problem which has local aspects. Mussolini has encouraged women to participate in sports. The Pope seems to feel that sport clothes, when worn by women, are an offense to Christian modesty. Now modesty is difficult of definition. Even a Pope must admit that in various parts of the world, what with climate and one thing and another, the extent of raiment varies. Good Catholic girls and women in Africa

cannot be expected to have precisely the same idea as Eskimos as to what constitutes quiet and refined attire. I've seen pictures of Italian women engaged in public demonstrations of gymnastic skill. They wore bloomers which once shocked and horrified American taste, but by now bloomers are accepted here as a matter of course even by persons of high moral standards. I think the Pope could be wrong about bloomers. At least I do not see why an individual might not faithfully follow every article of Catholic faith and still remain pro-bloomers. In fact it seems to me extraordinary that a great religious leader should think it necessary to include such things within the province of his authority.

Moreover, co-education does not stand or fall with bloomers. Girls and boys may study algebra together and still maintain wholly separate basketball teams. And I think that co-education is most valuable at the very time when the Pope would chiefly discourage it. Adolescence is a decisive period but I fail to see in what way segregation is supposed to soften the blow. Sexual development is at least a natural process and the more calmly it is accepted by the individuals concerned by just so much are health and morality promoted. This is, as the Pope has pointed out, a world of two sexes. All but the comparatively small number of persons who become members of holy orders have to live in this world. Then why not have them accept it as a place of diversity from the very beginning? Sex distinction is far more marked in mixed companies than in schools where boys and girls are herded separately. In fact I am not familiar with any problem which is best solved by running away from it.

Again, I wish respectfully to note a disagreement with the Pope's idea of what modernists are trying to do in the matter of sex education.

An extremely dangerous thing [the encyclical says] is that naturalism which invades the field of education in such delicate subjects as moral purity. Very widespread is the error of those who with dangerous presumptuousness and with ugly words promote so-called sexual education, falsely believing that they can forearm youths against the dangers of the senses with purely natural means, such as foolhardy inaction and preventive instruction or, worse still, by exposing them early in life to temptations in order to accustom them, as they say, and harden their hearts against those dangers. They err gravely in not recognizing the innate frailty of human nature and also in neglecting the experience which warns us that sins against morality are not so much the result of intellectual unpreparedness as of a weak will exposed to temptation and unsupported by grace.

And here I think no true issue exists. The Pontiff has very largely manufactured it. He says that intellectual preparation is not enough. Yet surely it is not impossible to equip a youth with both grace and understanding. They are not mutually exclusive. When one prays to be guarded against some certain temptation he is not necessarily fatally handicapped because he happens to have some knowledge of the nature of that temptation.

HEYWOOD BROUN

Clemenceau the Destroyer

By ROBERT DELL

Paris, December 18

MAYNARD KEYNES said in his "Economic Consequences of the Peace" that Clemenceau had one illusion, France, and one disillusion, the whole of mankind, especially his fellow-countrymen. It would be difficult to give in a sentence a more exact summary of Clemenceau's psychology.

Georges Clemenceau was a very remarkable and very exceptional man, but not in the sense indicated in most of his obituary notices. Of all the newspaper articles that I have read about him since his death, few showed such an understanding of his character as that published in the *Manchester Guardian* of November 25 with the title, A Daemonic Figure. It was written by an anonymous author whom others besides myself must have identified as one of the most brilliant journalists of our time, who, alas! will write no more. The style no less than the penetrating analysis revealed the late J. G. Hamilton. Clemenceau has been called in every language "the greatest French statesman of his time." As Hamilton said in the article just mentioned, he had none of the qualities of a statesman: "There was nothing constructive about him, no suppleness, none of that feeling for compromise that is the mark of true statesmanship. Instead, he had an insatiable passion for destruction; he gloried in his own instinctive nihilism." But, as Hamilton also said, Clemenceau was a formidable personality, and few men have so impressed their personality on their contemporaries.

How did this come about? To what did Clemenceau owe his hold on the French, why did they turn to him in the hour of danger and submit to his dictatorship for two years? Certainly not because of his past political or diplomatic achievements. He was seventy-six years old when he became prime minister for the second time in November, 1917, and his long political career had been barren of any constructive action. He had been in active politics nearly all his life—he was only twenty-nine when he became mayor of Montmartre in 1871 under the Paris Commune—and he had not a single reform, not a single political achievement of any sort to his credit. Most of his political career had been spent voluntarily in opposition, a purely destructive opposition, for even his criticism was not constructive. Clemenceau always denied, never affirmed—he was negation made flesh. He made his reputation in the Chamber as a wrecker, as the man that overthrew ministries, and it was in a great measure thanks to him that France had twenty-nine successive cabinets in twenty years (1873-1893). It was not until October 25, 1906, when he was sixty-five, that he became a minister for the first time in the stop-gap cabinet of M. Sarrien, whom he succeeded as prime minister seven months later. He was prime minister on that occasion for nearly three years and the best comment on his term of office is his own cynical remark in the Chamber: "Nous sommes en pleine incohérence." In those three years Clemenceau broke up the Bloc of the Left that had governed France since 1899, disintegrated the Radical Party to which he himself belonged, stirred up by his arrogance and domineering methods

disorders which he repressed with bloodshed, and very nearly plunged France into war with Germany over the Casablanca incident in September, 1908, when German deserters from the French Foreign Legion, protected by the German consul, were arrested by the French authorities. Clemenceau sat up the whole of one night with the mobilization orders ready to be sent out, but war was averted by the consent of the German Government to submit the matter to the Hague arbitration tribunal. Had there been war France would have been easily and quickly beaten, for the French army was then much less efficient than in 1914, France was not prepared for war as she was at the later date, and neither England nor Russia would have consented to be dragged into a war over so trivial a matter. It was during Clemenceau's premiership that the Seventeenth Regiment mutinied when ordered to fire on the wine growers of the South, goaded to revolt by his treatment of their demands, and his term of office was marked by some of the most violent strikes ever known in France. It was proved—and Clemenceau could not deny it—that he had paid an *agent provocateur* called Métivier to incite the workmen to violence to give him an excuse for shooting them down. When Clemenceau resigned in July, 1909, he left French politics in a state of confusion from which they have not yet entirely recovered.

Clemenceau's career in the press was as negative and destructive as his career in Parliament. He was out of Parliament from 1893, when he lost his seat in the Chamber, to 1902, when he was elected to the Senate, but during that time he retained immense influence as a political journalist. His defeat in 1893 was due to his connection with the Panama scandal. There seems to be little or no doubt that he had had money for his paper from Baron Reinach and a financier of British nationality called Cornelius Herz, both of whom were implicated in the Panama affair, but the chief reason of his disgrace was the absurd legend that he was a British agent, based on forged documents representing him to have been in relations with a mythical British agent called Norton. In fact Clemenceau desired good relations between England and France, no doubt in the hope that they would serve the cause of *revanche* as they ultimately did, but he was never under British influence and certainly did not follow British policy. He was, for instance, an ardent supporter of the Franco-Russian alliance at a time when it was regarded in England with suspicion and distrust, and in 1896 he said in an article in the *Dépêche de Toulouse*:

We wish Russia, after having been the accomplice of our downfall, to become the instrument of our complete resuscitation; that is, to call it by its right name, our revenge. If we said the contrary, nobody would believe us. It is therefore more simple to avow it.

When Clemenceau became prime minister for the first time in 1906, he was personally unknown in Downing Street, where his accession to office caused some uneasiness, for his reputation was that of a rather reckless and irresponsible extremist. Edward VII was sent off post-haste to Paris to make his acquaintance and try to tame the tiger and came

back with a reassuring report about the new prime minister's intentions, but Clemenceau's reckless conduct in 1908 justified the fears of Downing Street.

The one bright spot in Clemenceau's career was his attitude in the Dreyfus affair; it was in his paper, *L'Aurore*, that Zola's *J'accuse* was published. Anatole France, however, who had been brought into close contact with Clemenceau during the affair, never believed him to have been sincere or disinterested in that matter. I do not know on what evidence France's opinion was based, but Clemenceau's subsequent evolution was certainly not inconsistent with it. It is right to say that Anatole France always detested Clemenceau, even when they were on the same side in politics. He held him to be cruel and malevolent by nature, to be a man who had never done anything but harm and who delighted in doing harm. France himself has often been called cynical, and in a sense no doubt he was, but only a fool can fail to recognize the unbounded tolerance of human weaknesses and the immense sympathy with human suffering that underlie his raillery at human folly. He might have said of himself, with Beaumarchais's Figaro, "Je me hâte de rire de tout de peur d'en pleurer." Clemenceau, on the other hand, despised human sympathy as a sign of weakness. "Vous n'êtes qu'un sot avec votre pitié," he said to a friend; "dans la vie il faut être méchant, méchant, méchant." And he acted on his own maxim all his life. He hated the whole human race, as Keynes implied. In both private and public relations he was intensely vindictive and utterly unscrupulous as to the means that he used against his enemies and opponents and even against members of his own family that had incurred his displeasure. I doubt whether he ever had a real friendship or affection for any individual. His former private secretary and ardent admirer, M. Jean Martet, says of him in the current number of the *Revue de Paris* that he took no pleasure in the friendship of anybody that did not constantly keep him amused and excite his curiosity, and that he never understood or cared to understand the characters of those with whom he came into contact. That is to say, Clemenceau was a perfect egoist, utterly lacking in sympathy with others. Both his egoism and his ambition reached such proportions as to become monstrous and inhuman. He was prepared to sacrifice everybody and everything to them and to his idol—an abstraction called "France." For Clemenceau, who thought himself irreligious and indeed anti-religious, was an adept in what Anatole France called the worst of all religions, Patriotism. He was the super-patriot, and, as is always the case, there was a great deal of egoism and personal vanity in his patriotism. When people bitterly resent what they consider to be an affront to their church or their country, what they really resent is the affront to their own vanity. Clemenceau identified himself with "France," so that the supposed humiliation of France in 1871 was the humiliation of Georges Clemenceau, and he could never forget it.

This man, delighting as he did in bloodshed and destruction, was bound to come to the top in the war, if it lasted long enough. Anatole France, who foresaw so many things, foresaw this. In letters that he wrote to me quite early in 1915 he anticipated with dread a Clemenceau ministry. At that time he thought that it might be a Clemenceau-Barthou ministry—"the terrible Janus, Clemenceau-Barthou" was what he called it. France foresaw, too, that if and when Clemenceau did come into power he would behave

exactly as he did in fact behave. He knew the man. It is said that Clemenceau "saved France." It is true that he saved France—and the Allies—from a negotiated peace in 1917, but who will venture to say now that it could have been worse for Europe and the world than the peace afterward made? There is every reason to think that it would have been better for everybody, including France—not the mystical abstraction of Clemenceau's devotion, but the real country and its inhabitants. In 1917 there had been two serious offers of peace negotiations, the first from the Austrian Emperor through Prince Sixtus de Bourbon, the second from the German Emperor through the Belgians, when it was suggested that Briand should go to Switzerland incognito to meet Baron von der Lancken. The facts about the second had become known to the Chamber in a secret session in October, 1917, and such was the indignation at Ribot's conduct in turning down the German proposal that he was forced to resign. It was then that Poincaré reluctantly came to the conclusion that his old personal enemy, Clemenceau, was the only man capable of forcing France to continue the war. The folly of the Socialists in combining with the Right to overthrow the Painlevé Cabinet gave the opportunity a few weeks later of putting Clemenceau in power.

It is not true that Clemenceau believed in the victory of the Allies. He himself said after the war—the fact has been published since his death by more than one of his intimates—that he had never believed in victory until June, 1918. Before he became prime minister he was one of the worst "defeatists" in France. Day after day his factotum, Jeroboam Rothschild, alias Georges Mandel, came to the lobbies of the Chamber and drew deputies and journalists aside one after the other into a recess where he imparted to them terrifying and usually imaginary stories of appalling military disasters that had been concealed from the public. Clemenceau's paper, *L'Homme Enchaîné*, was in constant difficulties with the censors, often for publishing information likely to help the enemy and hamper the military operations of the Allies. These maneuvers were part of a desperate intrigue to get into power at all costs. It was not easy for Clemenceau to get into power, for he was generally distrusted and, as he himself said, had not half a dozen friends. Finally he secured the support of the Action Française and the Right by promising to have Caillaux and Malvy arrested on charges in which he himself certainly did not believe. Léon Daudet hinted in an article the other day that Clemenceau had not kept to the bargain in that he had not had Caillaux and Malvy shot. Clemenceau ruled by fear and terrorism. He had always inspired fear by his biting tongue and unscrupulous methods—that was how he imposed his personality—and when all the power was in his hands everybody knew that he would stick at nothing to gain his ends. Every means of terrorism was resorted to, including that of listening in on the telephone communications of politicians and blackmailing them by threatening to show their wives verbatim reports of compromising conversations. Over the heads of others hung the threat that they would share the fate of Caillaux and Malvy if they were not careful. Clemenceau even said that he would have Anatole France arrested if he said "a word too much," although the fact was not known to France himself until after the end of the war.

The end was victory, no doubt, but if it had not been? And it would not have been, but for American intervention

and the British blockade. Even as it was, the Germans came within an ace of victory in 1918. In May of that year Clemenceau believed so little in victory that he said that there was nothing left for the French people but to go down to the sea and perish there together. The truth—the dreadful truth—is that he was quite prepared to sacrifice the French people to “France”—and Georges Clemenceau. Victory and revenge, if possible, but if not, then ruin and annihilation rather than a negotiated peace though it should give Alsace-Lorraine to France as a negotiated peace in 1917 probably would have done. Clemenceau was, as Hamilton said in the article already quoted, a “daemonic figure.”

His pride had a terrible fall when the worms turned against their tyrant under cover of a secret ballot and he was rejected as candidate for the presidency. Clemenceau never recovered from the blow and never forgave the affront. He isolated himself from an ungrateful world and indulged his spite by confiding to his few visitors, mostly royalists and reactionaries, his poor opinion of all his contemporaries and his conviction that democracy was a failure (had it not re-

jected Georges Clemenceau?) and that the Republican regime would be the ruin of France. But although the tiger could still roar a little his claws were drawn and nobody was any longer afraid of him. His hold on France is ended. The attempts since his death to exalt him into a national hero have failed. He was never loved; he is rapidly ceasing even to be admired. The indifference of the public was shown by the poor attendance at the grotesque function in his honor at the Arc de Triomphe. The victory for which he sacrificed so many French lives has turned to dust and ashes; the peace treaties that he made are crumbling to pieces. And there are signs that the French people are beginning to recognize that wiser and better than the spirit of Georges Clemenceau is the spirit of the man who wrote in a book published only a few months before the outbreak of the war:

War engenders war and victory defeat. God, conquered, will become Satan; Satan, conquering, will become God. . . . As to ourselves, celestial spirits, sublime daemons, we have destroyed Ialdabaoth, our tyrant, if in ourselves we have destroyed Ignorance and Fear.

A Railroad View of Consolidation

By J. G. LYNE

IT is now nearly ten years since the Transportation Act of 1920 was passed. Yet consolidation under its provisions seems even more remote now than it did at the time of its passage, even though the Interstate Commerce Commission has adopted a consolidation plan. The consolidation provisions of the Transportation Act are briefly as follows:

That the Interstate Commerce Commission shall, “as soon as practicable” adopt a plan for the consolidation of the railroads into a limited number of systems,

That the new systems shall preserve competition and existing channels of trade “as fully as possible,”

That the new systems shall be so arranged that their costs of transportation as related to their values shall be approximately the same,

That the adoption by the commission of its plan must be a condition precedent to the authorization of any particular consolidation proposal and that such particular plans must conform to the commission’s general plan if they are to be approved, and

That the outstanding securities of an amalgamated railroad corporation must not exceed the valuation as fixed by the Interstate Commerce Commission.

What has the Interstate Commerce Commission been doing in the ten years which have passed since the enactment of the Transportation Act? Its first step was to engage the services of Professor William Z. Ripley of Harvard University to draft a proposed plan, as a basis upon which to start. The commission took Professor Ripley’s plan, made a few changes in it, and then, in September, 1921, served it upon the railways as a tentative report. In March of the following year hearings were begun and lasted through that year and 1923. Oral arguments were heard in February, 1924.

By 1925 the commission had apparently run into difficulties in arriving at a decision. In its annual report for that

year it reproduced a letter sent to Congress in which it recommended, among other things, that the law be amended to absolve it from the duty of adopting a complete plan of consolidation and to permit a more expeditious determination of value of properties proposed to be consolidated. These recommendations were repeated in the annual reports of 1926, 1927, and 1928, in the last year with the explanation that action in adopting a final consolidation plan was being delayed awaiting some action on the part of Congress. Now, apparently weary of waiting for Congress, the commission has announced its complete plan.

It should not be overlooked that consolidation of a sort is possible under the present law. One railroad acquires control, by lease or stock purchase, of another. Quasi-consolidation of this kind is going on all the time, but not at a very rapid rate. It does not involve the scrambling of properties so that they cannot later be unscrambled. Still, the commission has refrained from encouraging such quasi-consolidation along lines which might conflict with its putative general plan. Furthermore, consolidation of this kind does not secure the benefits of complete amalgamation, since the companies involved must be separately maintained and no simplification in accounting or other overhead activities is possible.

It is acknowledged that the motive force toward consolidation must come from the railroads. The Interstate Commerce Commission has no power to compel consolidation, and it would probably be difficult to frame a constitutional law which would give it that power. No external authority is needed, however, to bring about railroad consolidation, which is a development dating from the infancy of the industry and continuing steadily until it was almost completely stopped by the Sherman Act, which forbade combinations in restraint of trade, and particularly by the decision in the Northern Securities case in 1904. Such consolidation as has taken place has been a natural economic devel-

opment proceeding on an ordinary business basis, the A & B railroad foreseeing economies in the acquisition of the C & D which would enable it to offer more to the owners of that railroad as purchase money than the owners could hope to earn from continuing to operate the property independently. Consolidation of this kind is a natural economic phenomenon to be observed in many industries. It has a distinct advantage over any nation-wide, pre-arranged plan in that each step in the process must stand the test of its economic desirability, which test, if railroad efficiency is to be promoted, is absolutely essential.

It seems to be taken for granted that a large industrial enterprise is *ipso facto* more efficient than a smaller one, and that this general principle is also true of the railroad industry. But there is an outstanding difference between the railroads and most other industries. In the latter, combination results in the elimination of small and inefficient plants and concentration of production in modern factories, where a heavy investment in modern machinery can be utilized to the utmost. The product of the railway industry is ton-miles and passenger-miles. If consolidation meant that production of ton-miles and passenger-miles now performed on far-flung, light-traffic lines could be abandoned and such production concentrated upon highly developed, level, four-track lines, then we might expect railroad combination to produce economies similar to those in industry. Of course this is not possible, and the economies to be expected from railroad consolidation are much less than might at first be supposed. There is a size beyond which railroad management is likely to become less effective; for a railroad is widely scattered and, even with modern facilities for communication, extremely difficult of intelligent centralized control. There are economies to be expected from consolidation, with its probable savings from standardization and mass-production methods in shops, but it is easily possible to overestimate such advantages and overlook the more effective managerial control of the smaller property.

Consolidation to promote economy in transportation, then, ought to take place only when railroad managers intimately concerned with the properties believe the amalgamation economically desirable. There are undoubtedly many railroad lines which, because of their peculiar traffic conditions or other reasons, can operate more efficiently as independent companies than they could as parts of large systems. If economy in transportation is to be fostered, then such lines should remain independent.

Is there any better method for determining whether a given consolidation will be economical than the fact that a buyer and a seller, both knowing intimately the properties involved, can agree upon a transaction, believing it to be to their mutual advantage? This is not an appeal for complete *laissez faire* in railroad consolidation. There is more involved in consolidation than the self-interest of the railroads engaging in it. There is, for instance, the maintenance of competition, the desirability of which is quite generally accepted by both railroad men and their patrons. There is also the matter of the absorption of weak lines. The extent to which it would be ethical for the government to prescribe the absorption of such lines as a condition precedent to the approval of a specific consolidation plan is debatable. On the other hand, authority to consolidate in some degree according to their own plans would be a concession to railroad

owners for which they could afford also to concede something. The authority which the commission now has over the issue of railroad securities affords ample protection against capital inflation from the process, and the provision in the present law, that valuation agreement must precede consolidation and be used to control its security issues, serves only to make progress even more difficult.

The primary purpose of consolidation is to avoid the possibility that, with uniform rates, some lines will prosper unduly while others will starve. If this were the only consideration, then the logical way to meet it would be to combine all railways into one huge company. But there are other considerations, one of them being the preservation of competition. Since competition is to be preserved, which approach to consolidation promises to bring the earlier solution of the problem of the weak roads—that contained in the present law or the more liberal one here advocated?

A regulated *laissez faire* policy like that outlined herein is the more promising, I believe, primarily for the reason that it is a policy which will encourage, and not hinder, consolidation of railroads that are already prepared to amalgamate. A preconceived, nation-wide plan such as is now put forward by the commission will unavoidably throw some railroads together against their owners' wishes and separate others whose owners wish to join forces. There is no compulsion in the law, and there probably could not be any without much time-consuming litigation. The insistence upon consolidation according to a preconceived plan, therefore, while it will permit some consolidations, promises to postpone general consolidation indefinitely. If, on the other hand, any consolidation were permitted which would conform to certain definite principles—public convenience and necessity, maintenance of competition, absence of financial manipulation, some consideration of including necessitous weak lines—then great and immediate progress would be forthcoming. The Interstate Commerce Commission would not be forced, as it now is, to inject itself into situations where the parties concerned can themselves reach an agreement, but would restrict itself to the much simpler task of adjudicating differences and passing on specific plans in the light of the public interest.

If the commission were empowered, without any reference to a prescribed plan, to approve or disapprove any consolidation proposal put before it, it would be just as easy to hinder development of gross differences as between companies as it is under the present law. In fact, it would really be easier, since the present law acts as a brake on almost all consolidation progress and we continue to have weak and strong roads, with no effective steps being taken to solve the problem which they present.

Nor must we lose sight of the fact that nobody knows, for a certainty just what is the ideal size of a railroad company. Is it wise to plan the amalgamation of all our railways into a definite number of approximately comparable systems, when we know that such action will include many smaller railways which might have operated more efficiently and more satisfactorily to their patrons if they remained independent? Consolidation ought to produce some economies, but the only way to be sure of them is to weigh each proposal carefully and put to proof each step in the process.

Fortunately, it is not necessary to proceed entirely on assumption in the matter of consolidation. While the sub-

ject was in the early stages of examination and study in this country, a consolidation bill was passed in Great Britain and its provisions were speedily carried out; 124 railway companies were reduced to four, which have been in operation since 1923. Consolidation was effected on a territorial basis, rather than one of maintaining competition; that is to say, each company is dominant in its own territory. There is some overlapping of territories, it is true, and some competition remains, but nothing of the sort contemplated by the consolidation provisions of our Transportation Act. Consolidation without competition should tend to promote greater economies than where competition is retained—the abandonment of competing and parallel facilities being made possible, as well as the savings from standardization, mass methods in repair work, and like gains which can be secured under any form of consolidation. Presumably, therefore, consolidation in Great Britain ought to have brought economies as great as anything we can expect in the United States, and possibly greater. What has actually occurred? Opinions differ widely, but it seems evident that the savings have

been far from startling. Indeed it could probably be demonstrated without much difficulty that the American railways, without consolidation, have shown a greater ratio of improved efficiency since the war than the British railways under amalgamation. The economies to be expected from consolidation per se, therefore, seem to be relatively less than those obtainable through a constant effort to develop better operating methods and a willingness to spend money to secure the advantages of modern equipment.

The complexity of the situation is infinite—the details of corporate relationships, the ebb and flow of traffic, the possible combinations which can be worked out. To expect to lay a prearranged pattern of railway systems upon such a crazy-quilt and have it conform is the height of futility. The problem can be worked out satisfactorily only if it is tackled piecemeal—and then preferably by the parties at interest, with the Interstate Commerce Commission keeping a watchful eye from the standpoint of the public and acting as arbiter on points of difference. This is the economical method of achieving desirable consolidations.

Unemployment in England

By JOHN A. HOBSON

A LABOR government is expected to improve the conditions of the laboring classes. So far the successes of Mr. MacDonald's Government have been in other fields, especially in foreign policy, which though making perhaps valuable indirect contributions to our economic resources in improved foreign trade and reduced costs of armaments, have brought no present relief to our industrial distresses. Though some slight improvement is visible in our iron and steel trade, our export trades in general still remain in the trough of the deepest and most prolonged depression recorded in our history. During the past eight years there have been two slight flickers of recovery, but they have soon vanished, and we are all now convinced that the policy of waiting with folded arms for a recovery of world trade which shall absorb our million and a quarter unemployed is sheer imbecility. A Labor government that fails to tackle unemployment successfully, and with reasonable speed, will certainly go under, whether by its own fault or not. It may be that a satisfactory solution of the problem is beyond the power of any government, that the new economic conditions of the post-war world, with its new national industries protected by tariff walls, and the rapid advances of productive power in Germany, the United States, and other countries, have permanently diminished the volume of our export trades, and reduced the number of workers that can be sustained on British soil at the standard of living which earlier conditions have enabled them to reach. If so, nothing but a slow process of emigration, impeded by the "dole" policy and the immigration obstructions of foreign countries and our dominions, seems to offer an escape from our plight.

Few economists or business men really believe that the immediate proposals for stimulating employment by public expenditure upon roads, housing, and other public works will greatly reduce the volume of unemployment during the next few years. The speech made recently by Mr.

Thomas, who is in charge of this department of governmental policy, has confirmed this view of the unsubstantiality of such measures for stimulating unemployment. Moreover, the finance of the situation, taken in conjunction with the enlarged provisions for unemployed relief under the new measure piloted through the House of Commons by Miss Bondfield, is bound to cause great embarrassment to Mr. Snowden when he is confronted with the necessity of raising increased revenues to meet these obligations. The wilder members of the Labor Party, under the leadership of Mr. Maxton and Mr. Wheatley, no doubt hold that capitalist profiteers and landlords can be easily made to disgorge the necessary sums. But no such illusions possess the minds of Mr. MacDonald or of his Chancellor. That some fresh taxation must be imposed is certain in view of the financial weakness of Mr. Churchill's predatory finance. But no such large increase of revenue is possible as would be needed to make a substantial impression upon the mass of unemployment by means of public works or even subsidies for semi-public enterprises such as railway, gas, and water companies. The statement just issued by Mr. Thomas relating to such grants and guaranties does not profess to provide more than a year's employment for some 84,000 men, not 7 per cent of the present volume of unemployed. The more liberal provisions for unemployed relief under the new act will take off a considerable amount of public money without providing any increased employment. These policies are to be regarded as emergency or palliative measures rather than as remedies.

Such considerations are exercising the minds of more thoughtful statesmen and business men in favor of exploring the possibilities of larger and more fundamental policies. Though the demand for a removal of these problems from the category of a purely party issue, voiced by Mr. Snowden, and supported by many members of the Liberal and Labor Parties, has not been openly adopted by the Government,

it has not been rejected. There are signs at any rate of a willingness to take outside men, both economists and business men, into conference on the graver aspects of the situation. Mr. MacDonald has long been known to favor the establishment of a General Economic Staff, to correlate the economic information of the various departments handling economic administration, and to offer expert counsel to the government for guidance of this policy. Several lunches have been held at Downing Street where economists and business men of various political complexions have been brought into private conference to discuss not only this proposal but other methods of bringing authoritative advice to bear upon the industrialists and labor leaders whose intelligence and active good-will are required for the application of any larger remedies. These larger remedies fall under the now familiar heads of "rationalization, reorganization, stabilization, the cooperation of firms in an industry for the elimination of waste, specialization of production, and, in general, improved technique and organization." It is recognized that a large part of our coal trouble is due to the survival of mines with inferior seams or inferior equipment, that many of our cotton and woolen mills are not up to the modern standard in plant or management, and that the same is true in our metal, engineering, and other trades. The war and post-war troubles lost us many of our foreign markets, in addition to those lost by the new economic nationalism. While the public works and subsidies may be of some immediate service in reducing unemployment and stimulating trade through enlarged consumption, nothing short of a widespread and carefully designed method of cutting costs of production in our staple manufacturers can go far toward restoring trade prosperity and reducing unemployment to its normal pre-war limits. Rejecting as socially unsound and impracticable the demand for wage-cuts which to unintelligent employers is the only way of reducing costs, we come to that larger policy of reconditioning of industries as unitary wholes to which we have alluded, as the only way of salvation.

But is it practicable in a sufficient measure? Here our problems arise. Is the capital available for the scrapping of obsolete plants and replacement by up-to-date plants, and for other necessary expenditures in adjusting business to the specialized requirements of a well-organized industry? Secondly, if the capital is available, is the mentality of employers and workers capable of responding to the demands for readjustment of their stereotyped habits, rules, and natures? Taking first the question of capital, I find economists and business men generally agreed that for schemes of reconditioning, as likewise for new productive businesses, there is no lack of monetary capital, provided the applicants can show a reasonable prospect of profitable sales. Though most firms in the depressed industries have depleted their resources, and must look outside for any new investment capital they require, such capital is obtainable on reasonable terms for well-indorsed business propositions. The sums recklessly invested during the past year or two in bogus or wild-cat enterprises show that investment capital is not lacking. So, likewise, with bank facilities in the way of loans and overdrafts for running expenses; such credits are available to assist in financing sound amalgamations and the general work of industrial reconstruction. Nor is the required flow of new capital confined to our own investible savings.

In a word, it is not want of capital that is the obstacle to the reconditioning of our industries. It is the slow response of our industrialists and workers to the urgent need for revolutionizing the structure and operation of their industries. Few employers can yet be got to recognize that the capitalist era of individual enterprise and *laissez faire* must in the staple industries be replaced by an era of combination, financial, industrial, and commercial. The few experiments in the chemical, the steel-rail, and some minor trades in rationalization or cartelization are still regarded as abnormalities by the general run of business men, who cling closely to purely personal control, established practices, and old-fashioned manufacturing. It is true that larger business units are being produced in staple trades by amalgamation, but the idea of a unitary policy, involving distribution of orders, concerted specialization, cooperative marketing, price agreements, the elimination of obsolete plants, is still distasteful to the average business man. Nothing short of the slow education of necessity and the struggle for survival will make him willing to enter the new industrial order.

Labor is in the same position. The prolonged depression has made workers more reluctant than ever to eye with favor a "rationalization" of their industry which would lower costs of production either by cutting wage rates or by displacing skilled labor by machinery. For it is true that in many, if not most, cases the first immediate effect of the proposed amalgamation and technical economies will be to "save labor" by reducing the number of skilled employees. This may be compensated for a time by increased employment in other trades making the new machines and other appliances which up-to-date production requires. But each trade looks to its own employment, and though lowered costs of production may eventually restore or enlarge the volume of employment by increased productivity and markets, the trade economist will be slow to accept any present risk or sacrifice for a speculative future gain which he may not live to share.

The restoration of our industrial prosperity and the absorption of our unemployed cannot in any case be a rapid process. Any early bettering of trade conditions, either by government aids or by more intelligent business organization, will not be likely to satisfy the sanguine expectation raised by electioneering promises. This will not be the fault of the Government. They are bent on doing what they can to stimulate productivity and reduce unemployment by public aids and pressures. But Britain is to a less extent than any other great nation a self-contained economic system. Our great foreign trade cannot revive and expand to maintain our working population on its higher standard of living without something like a corresponding rise in the wages and other conditions of industry in other countries. For there are limits to "the efficiency of high wages and short hours," and where scientific technique and highly organized industry can be operated by relatively low-paid "robot" labor, there is no guaranty possible of the foreign or even the domestic markets Britain requires for the full output of her industries. Rationalization, therefore, if accepted as a policy, must be supported by a vigorous economic internationalism which, working at Geneva or by trade-union action, shall raise the standard of real wages in the more backward countries toward our own standard, thus enlarging the world market for those commodities which form the staples of working-class consumption and of standardized production.

In the Driftway

EXCURSION rates for the holidays, railroad consolidations, and the fact that the Drifter had to wait a half hour for a train not long ago have caused him to reflect once more upon the desolation of railroad stations. Wherever one goes by rail, he will find a place which will seem familiar to him, one place he will never feel at home in, the railway station. In the mysterious vistas of the Gare du Quai d'Orsay, under the great arch of the station at Tours, in the simple, forthright station at Cadiz, all above ground and somnolent under the white sun, the traveler feels exactly as he feels in the cindered shadow of a depot in Minnedoka, Idaho.

IT is true that, in America, railroad stations seem to have been built by the most unpleasant, if not the worst, architects available. This is partially explained by the fact that most of them were built in the latter half of the nineteenth century, though even that ample cloak does not cover all the sins against aesthetics of which the ordinary railroad station is guilty. Likewise, economics explains, though it does not extenuate, the crime of the cheap red paint which combines with the smoke of locomotives to mar many an American countryside. A sagebrush flat, with its sterile white alkali dust whipped into futile whirls by a wind that can bring no rain, is a sad sight. But set in the center of it a dull red railroad station, with its gingerbread gables rising above the treeless prairie like lost and useless ghosts—that is a sight to make the gods weep.

THE inside of the ordinary railroad station is of course even more depressing than the outside. The tick of the large, ungainly clock with the seemingly motionless hands; the sullen benches, strung along a dingy wall or bound back to back like desperate prisoners, divided by hard unyielding iron bars into spaces too large for one lonely traveler but too small for two; the tight-closed maw that opens only before train time to swallow up the hard-earned pennies; the inadequate lights in their dirty globes; the sound of impatient, slowed footsteps in the great dim cavern. And the insides of railway stations are even more alike than the outsides. A waiting-room seems to attract to itself certain aspects of dreariness that yield neither to race, to religion, nor to morals. It is desolate because it has no life of its own. Except in the ticket office, where no one may enter, there is neither warmth nor friendliness. Nobody goes to a railroad station except on his way to some other place. Always there is the clang, heard or unheard, of a train going somewhere else.

AND the Drifter doubts whether his favorite architect—or even he himself—could design a railroad station devoid of desolation. Grand Central Terminal, in New York, is the nearest approach to it, but Grand Central has what most stations lack. It has never-ceasing crowds that mill through it most of the twenty-four hours; it has bright lights; most important, it has dozens of shops where hundreds of people lead a consecutive daily existence. In fact the station at Grand Central is not the bright world that

whirls under its own starry sky. It is that dark void filled with the sounds of departure and arrival, of going and coming but never of staying, that lies beyond the ticket-taker.

PENNSYLVANIA Station, on the other hand, is first and last a railway station. One never loses there the sense of trains and travel. Like Grand Central, it has crowds and lights and shops, yet it has somehow managed to preserve, on a scale so grand that it attains a kind of magnificence, that unique quality which is to be found in railroad stations from Lahore to South Bend. In its gray recesses the traveler is reduced to his rightful, insignificant role, that of a crawler on the face of the earth. And despite unkind remarks that have passed here, the Drifter prefers Pennsylvania Station to Grand Central. A railroad station, after all, should not try to be anything else.

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

"The Smallest Investor"

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: It was with intense interest that I read the article, *The National City Fiasco*, in the issue of *The Nation* for January 1. The writer states that the banks sold securities even to the smallest investor. The following story may illustrate clearly how they did it.

At the beginning of August my aged father sent me \$1,500 requesting me to invest it for him safely. Prompted by advertisements of the National City Bank in which it recommended sound bonds for investment, I decided to go there. I consulted an "investment specialist" and asked him for a good bond yielding about 6 per cent. Much to my surprise he told me that I would be foolish to buy bonds. Anaconda Copper would be the right investment and, since it was selling around \$118 per share with a dividend of \$7, it would yield 6 per cent, just what I wanted. In two or three months the stock would sell for at least \$135 and would be still cheap at that. I asked to have some time to think this over, but, nevertheless, the stock was bought the same day for me, although I did not have any money with me at all. You probably know what happened. The stock is selling around \$70 (instead of \$135), a loss of almost \$600 on an investment of \$1,416 (twelve shares at \$118).

I wrote to the bank twice. In my first letter I asked them how the bank was going to protect its customers' interest if it persuaded them to buy stocks instead of bonds. The answer was that it was fairly sure that the dividend was being kept on the present level. Although the bank regretted the break in the market, it could not assume any responsibility. It pointed out that the stock rose shortly after the purchase to \$133, to which I answered that I did not buy it for speculation, but for investment. As their answers were not satisfactory (in their last letter they stated that Anaconda is now a much better purchase than sale—I suppose they want to sell me still more shares!), I wrote to Mr. Mitchell himself, asking whether it is in line with the investment policy of the bank to persuade a small investor to buy stocks instead of bonds and, when the investment turns out a total failure with regard to the safety of the principal, to decline all responsibility. Vice-President Byrnes answered for Mr. Mitchell that the bank was perfectly justified in recommending Anaconda, and that it was rather weak on my part to assent to buy stocks.

New York, January 2

W. H. HOEFELICH

The News Reel Theater

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Permit me to enter vigorous protest against one of the items on your honor roll for 1929. I mean the News Reel Theater. I assume that the people of this town are willing to pay a quarter in order to see United States marines marching aboard transports, President Hoover enforcing prohibition, battleships laying smoke-screens, and West Point cadets drilling, for an hour. The News Reel gives these people what they want. But on that principle, why not put on your list the News Reel's first cousin, the *Daily News*, to say nothing of the funny paper?

New York, January 6

A. F. BOCKMANN

Dispenser with Justice

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: The Brooklyn magistrate who, besides wielding a gavel in court, swings a cat-o'-nine-tails at home does not reflect much credit on whoever appointed him as a dispenser with justice. The home of an individual who can work himself up to such a frenzy should receive the immediate investigation of the Association for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

In my opinion, Magistrate Sabbatino has earned a rest from his judicial duties for the remainder of his natural life.

Larchmont, N. Y., January 4

I. BLOCK

Mr. Layman Complains

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: In plain, direct, understandable English, the main body of *The Nation* discusses the social, economic, and political affairs of the day in such manner that its layman readers can readily obtain a liberal interpretation of current events. Yet in that section of its pages devoted to the theater, literature, music, and poetry, *The Nation* becomes a forum for the esoteric and sophisticated literati. In these latter pages the layman wanders as in a daze, catching here a sentence that is vaguely intelligible, but missing there whole paragraphs of hidden thoughts. He feels like Mr. Barnstaple, in Wells's "Men Like Gods." Is this failure to comprehend these bewildering criticisms, reviews, and essays to be dismissed with the patronizing remark that the layman should build himself better foundations and otherwise improve himself so as not to be such a blank when he encounters the profundities? Is it permissible to remark here that often depth is not so much depth as poor writing?

Mr. Layman is not unusual in that he wishes to provide himself with food, clothing, and shelter. To insure these primary essentials of life, it is necessary that he hire himself out for wages. To earn these wages, he must be at his mercenary labors an average of eight hours per day for five days, and four or five hours on the sixth, with one day only of the seven untrammelled by this vulgar necessity. Ordinarily, he must sleep eight hours of the twenty-four, and some three hours each day are spent at table and in going to and from work. Thus, of the twenty-four hours of the workday, there remain about five in which to attend to such matters as shaving, bathing, repairing little breaks about the house, exercising, reading the daily newspaper, *The Nation*, two or three other periodicals necessary for a balanced diet, keeping up with the better books, attending the

theater, the concert, the lecture-hall, receiving the occasional visitor and paying back the call.

These perfectly obvious but sordid facts are here tediously narrated to bring home to the worthy scribes (who are really such good fellows and whom we really like) that we of the laity cannot possibly develop the breadth of intelligence necessary to imbibe with any success an English which has meaning only to the narrow circle of critics who spend most of their hours in libraries and bookshops.

St. Louis, January 9

CARL F. ROTH

Prosperity and the Land

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Is it really worth while to use pages of *The Nation* for such unscientific articles as those of Stuart Chase on prosperity? The only kind of prosperity to be sought and maintained is that which must come from unhindered, free production of wealth (products of labor and nothing else), and the distribution of this wealth among the three primary factors—land, labor, and capital. This is the natural distribution. Farmers, as farmers, as producers of wealth, have no interest whatever in economic rent or in the renting or selling values of land, and in considering the prosperity of farmers as a class—the share of general prosperity they have been getting or are getting—it is absurd to consider they gain by increasing land values or lose by decreasing land prices.

This would easily be seen if all farmers were renters, but it certainly should not be overlooked by such investigators as Mr. Chase. Dr. Copeland's "beautiful profit and loss account," quoted by Mr. Chase in his article, *The Farmer's Share*, is properly a subject for ridicule rather than use in a serious examination of prosperity. The natural law which tends to apportion to landowners, as such, a very large and absolutely unearned share in the wealth annually produced is so plain, so undisputed, so universally orthodox in its professorial explanations, that there is no excuse for its being ignored by writers for and editors of *The Nation*.

Long Branch, N. J., December 20

GEORGE WHITE

Contributors to This Issue

ROBERT DELL is *The Nation's* correspondent in France.

J. G. LYNE is financial editor of the *Railway Age*.

JOHN A. HOBSON is a foremost British economist and a contributing editor of *The Nation*.

STANLEY J. KUNITZ will publish in the spring a book of poetry, "Intellectual Things."

HENRY HAZLITT is literary editor of *The Nation*.

WILLIAM SPENCE ROBERTSON is professor of history at the University of Illinois.

NORAH MEADE reviews novels regularly for *The Nation*.

GRANVILLE HICKS frequently reviews books for *The Nation*.

EDA LOU WALTON is assistant professor of English at New York University.

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JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH is dramatic editor of *The Nation*.

ALEXANDER BAKSHV, author of several books on the theater, writes on motion pictures for *The Nation*.

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Books, Films, Drama

Parting

By STANLEY J. KUNITZ

Parting, I take with me completed June,
Remembered hoard of time in thought compact;
Eventual winds will not dissolve a tune
Of solid air, the body of this fact.
Mind's acres are forever green. Oh, I
Shall keep perpetual summer here; I shall
Refuse to let one startled swallow die,
One petal of this colored beauty fall.

Here, wandered from confusion, I shall greet
My youth immaculate in memory's urn;
This is my country, where the tireless feet
Of my adventure, homing, will return.
Each day will end in this day; every ship
Will bring me back, bright lip on lonely lip.

Consolation or Control?

The Quest for Certainty: A Study of the Relation of Knowledge and Action. By John Dewey. Gifford Lectures, 1929. Minton, Balch and Company. \$4.

The Sources of a Science of Education. By John Dewey. Horace Liveright. \$1.50.

A Bibliography of John Dewey. By Milton Halsey Thomas and Herbert Wallace Schneider. Columbia University Press. \$3.

Essays in Honor of John Dewey. Henry Holt and Company. \$4.

THE Quest for Certainty" is devoted to the elaboration, the insistent iteration, directly and by antithesis, of one idea—that of the intimate connection between knowledge and action. It is an apotheosis of the experimental procedure. It installs doing as the heart of knowing. Mr. Dewey contends that all ideas must be defined ultimately in terms of operations performed or to be performed. These operations need not always be actual; they may be imaginatively possible, or they may merely be performed symbolically. Symbols—words, mathematical formulas—enable us to act without acting. But all thinking, all experimental inquiry, finally means *directed action* of some kind.

Mr. Dewey contrasts this view with that of the traditional theory of knowledge, which he calls the "spectator theory." Nature must be understood, he holds, not by a mind thinking about it from without but by operations conducted from within. The human organism is a part of the natural world; its interactions with that world are "genuine additive phenomena." The experimental method consists essentially in altering existing natural arrangements to produce new arrangements. Knowledge is the fruit of the undertakings that transform problematic into resolved situations. Where tradition makes the test of ideas their agreement with some *antecedent* state of things, Dewey finds this test in the *consequences* of the acts to which the ideas lead—in the new arrangements of things which directed operations bring into existence.

Mr. Dewey brushes all the great classical philosophic systems quietly aside. He seeks to dispose of them, in the present volume, not by any detailed logical or technical criticism, but by

suggesting that they owe their existence to dubious motives. They are not disinterested; they are rationalizations of desire. The philosophic quest for certainty is at bottom nothing more than a quest for peace of soul, a quest for a refuge. That is why philosophy, from the time of Plato, has glorified the eternal at the expense of the transitory, the invariant at the expense of the changing. It has translated into a rational form the doctrine of escape from the vicissitudes of existence. It has substituted a *feeling* of certainty for an active coping with conditions, assurance for insurance.

Hence any quest for certainty that is universal, applying to everything, is in Dewey's view a compensatory perversion. Attainment of the relatively secure and settled can take place, he maintains, only with respect to *specified* problematic situations. For the quest for certainty Dewey would substitute the search for methods of control. Ideas, he holds, apart from their aesthetic appeal, are intellectually worthless except as they pass into actions which rearrange and reconstruct in some way, be it little or large, the world in which we live. As for values, they are the products of our inevitable desires and affections, and need no wholesale scientific or philosophic "justification."

The present volume reinforces Dewey's position as the most original and important American thinker of our time. Its philosophy, to my mind, embodies the implications of the new physics in a more integral as well as more plausible manner than any other that has yet been formulated. There is little of that flirtation with dubious paradoxes which we find in Russell and Eddington. One is almost disposed to agree with Dewey when he holds that the profound change in outlook which he has personally helped so much to bring about, the attitude which seeks security through regulation of change rather than through ascribing absolute certainty to the unchangeable, which tests truths not by antecedents but by consequents, constitutes a reversal in philosophy "comparable to a Copernican revolution."

Yet the very importance of Dewey's thought makes his shortcomings more evident. Most of these lie in his style, not only in its diction and sentence structure, but in its larger elements. Mr. Dewey's argument is carried forward too exclusively in abstract terms; his work would gain immensely in vividness and conviction if he kept returning to concrete illustrations and verifications. It is curious that a thinker who seeks a philosophy that shall retain its contact with our everyday life, who constantly emphasizes the particular and the specific, should do it almost entirely by generalities. The writing in detail, while it is not devoid of occasional felicitous phrases, is for the most part clumsy and careless. One comes upon obvious redundancies, predicates that do not agree with their subjects, and other solecisms. Perhaps Mr. Dewey's most serious faults, from the standpoint of making himself clear, are his frequent failure to indicate the logical connection between one sentence and the next, and the indefinite reference of his pronouns, which are constantly sending the reader off on false scents. All this results in a disproportionate wear and tear on the mind, which tends to make one's reading of Dewey, in spite of the importance of what he has to say, a duty rather than a delight.

I must confess, finally, that I cannot rid myself of the suspicion that Mr. Dewey pushes his "experimental empiricism" too far. While I can readily see that the experimental procedure *adds* facts to nature, and that its ultimate effect may be radically to alter the course of "natural" events, the primary purpose of experiment still seems to me to be the discovery of an antecedent reality—the cause of a disease, the distance of a star, or what not.

In "The Sources of a Science of Education" Mr. Dewey

sees education as essentially in practice an art like engineering, which still allows room for the original and daring projects of exceptional individuals, but which progressively incorporates more and more of science into itself.

"A Bibliography of John Dewey" illustrates at once Dewey's astonishing productiveness and the extent of his influence. It lists upward of five hundred items of his authorship, and some two hundred relating to him. It covers everything up to the summer of 1929. "Essays in Honor of John Dewey," with its twenty-nine contributors, must be added to this impressive total.

HENRY HAZLITT

An American Augustus

Polk: The Diary of a President, 1845-1849. Edited by Allan Nevins. Longmans, Green and Company. \$5.

POLK may be appropriately styled the American Augustus. Few national leaders have directed such an expansion of their country as was promoted by the eleventh President of the United States. Not many chief magistrates of the republic have been so much misunderstood during their lifetime, and indeed for some time afterwards, and this in spite of the fact that only one other President has left us so careful a record of his manifold activities in a diary. In the present case the misunderstanding is probably not unconnected with the fact that it was not until 1908 that Professor Charles W. Mann of the Lewis Institute of Technology undertook to edit and publish the diary of Polk, which had been purchased with letters and miscellaneous papers from his relatives by the Chicago Historical Society. After Professor Mann's death the task was carefully completed by Milo M. Quaife. The diary was thus first printed in 1910 as Volumes VI-IX of the Chicago Historical Society's "Collections" in an edition of five hundred copies. The scarcity of this work amply warrants the republication of salient portions in a one-volume edition.

The text of the new edition has not always been collated with the Quaife text with exactness. In one place (page 118) "would" becomes "should"; two pages farther on "to" is transmuted into "through." Although in the main the selections have been well made, yet some passages are omitted which another editor would presumably have included. The editor has not always been consistent in the use of leaders to indicate omissions from the Quaife text. In one instance (page 116) leaders are not even used to apprise the unwary reader that fourteen pages of the original diary have been omitted. The diarist's sententious statement that he considered the passage of the Walker tariff bill as "the most important domestic measure" of his administration is unwisely deleted (page 125), presumably because this series of selections is mainly concerned with territorial expansion. In an important passage concerning the Oregon boundary dispute (page 114) the phrase "backing out from 54° 40'" appears as "caking out from 54° 40'." Historical scholars will perforce still have to rely upon the four-volume edition.

Nevertheless Mr. Nevins's edition will be cordially welcomed by teachers of American history as a useful source-book. Brackets in the Quaife text have been omitted, abbreviations spelled out, and misspelled words corrected. The reading public should peruse with interest this epic of expansion. In it one can read the thoughts of a taciturn, determined, and patriotic President concerning his foreign policy. Through its pages flit the leading personalities of our national life during those stirring years when American dominion was extended to the shores of the Pacific and when the United States narrowly escaped annexing the northern provinces of present Mexico.

WILLIAM SPENCE ROBERTSON

Dream and Be Free

Tomorrow's Voyage. By Leonard Hess. Ives Washburn. \$2.50.

THIS is the story of a man seeking permanent values in life and pinning an untried faith on the sea. As a boy Samuel Jones had loved to board the Ventura, to meet the captain and the captain's daughter, Amanda Stark. He failed to ship on the boat, and when later Carrie seduces him into marriage, he settles down to his grocery job on the Bowery. But all the time he dreams of "waterways and places green with trees"—and Amanda. When he finds day-to-day happiness, it is in a daughter who proves to have been his wife's child by another man. When he finds Amanda again, it is in a brothel. And yet, when he finally goes to sea as a passenger and not as the sailor he had hoped to be, his companions on his first and last voyage are the false daughter and the reformed harlot.

This is not a tragic book despite its plot, for its theme is: "Dreams take flight. When you dream, you are all free things. Day dreams. Night dreams, too. Flight need not lead anywhere. It is in itself liberation." Samuel Jones, grocery clerk, is the congenital dreamer, sensitive, imaginative, intelligent. Mr. Hess's character sense is subtle and acute, and he gives a life-like portrait of the little man behind the counter and the man behind the figure that faced the world. He is less reliable in his manner of writing. He uses at times to excellent purpose the system of the "aside," now credited to O'Neill as far as the stage is concerned but for which Shakespeare was also to blame. His use of the telegraphic sentence is, however, tiresome. A telegram is meant to condense meaning; if used for the purpose of isolating one word from another, then the words should be sufficiently striking to deserve the emphasis. "Large, hot drops. Splashing. Rattling"—neither adjective deserves the majesty of isolation. On the other hand, there is no waste verbiage in this book and much that is memorable in the writing as well as in the character drawing.

NORAH MEADE

Victorian Biography

The Life of George Meredith. By Robert Esmonde Sencourt. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$3.50.

ALTHOUGH Mr. Sencourt has had access to more material than previous biographers of Meredith, it can scarcely be said that his study necessitates any drastic reinterpretation or revaluation of the poet and novelist. Indeed, Mr. Sencourt fails to deal at all decisively with the major problem which other biographers have raised: the problem of Meredith as poseur. Though this book supplants its predecessors simply because Mr. Sencourt has used all the information hitherto available together with a certain amount of new material, it leaves room for a more penetrating analysis of Meredith's personality. Perhaps the requisite data for an honest and convincing analysis of the rather uncommonly mysterious temperament of this man are not and never will be available; certainly Mr. Sencourt has not given us such a study, nor, if one can judge from the prejudices and timidities of this volume, could he ever do so.

What Mr. Sencourt has done best is to show how Meredith's energy, pressing against the obstacles of life, surged into his art. Meredith is a beautiful example of the theory of art as compensation—a peculiarly beautiful example because his work shows that theory must be qualified if such truth as there is in it is to be brought out. Far from being an unusually maladjusted or thwarted person, he was, as the world goes,

rather happily established in relation to his environment. Nevertheless, many of his novels and his poems use the material of his own life—with a difference. He does in art what most of us do in day-dreams—imagines the course events would have taken if circumstances had been just a hair's breadth altered. But because his assumptions were firmly rooted in fact, and because he abandoned himself so completely to the guidance of the Comic Spirit, the resulting vision of what might have been is quite as real as any account of what was.

All this Mr. Sencourt brings out more or less clearly, and for this we can be grateful. In all his criticism he displays some sensitiveness, and his abounding admiration for Meredith is pleasant rather than otherwise. Nevertheless his critical powers, though by no means negligible, are not equal to the attempt to evaluate Meredith in relation to his Victorian background. On one page we find him rejoicing over Meredith's freedom from the canting smugness of his time; on another we find him arguing rather bitterly for the conventionality of Meredith's views. He treats at length Meredith's views on sex and religion, but it is with unconcealed uneasiness and with every intention of putting Meredith on the side of the angels. Of course, Meredith was partly a Victorian and partly something better or worse—most of us would say better. Mr. Sencourt's difficulty is that he is not himself sufficiently emancipated from Victorianism to distinguish with perfect clarity the points at which Meredith rose above the Victorian mentality and the points at which he was submerged by it.

Despite Mr. Sencourt's friendship with M. Maurois, who offers kind words of commendation, the book bears few traits of the new biography. It has not the faults of the cheap, mechanical, fictionalized biography that passes for new; nor has it the clarity, precision, and carefulness of form of the new biography at its best. It is a somewhat confused and confusing account, a useful compilation of facts illuminated by flashes of sound criticism, but yielding neither a complete and satisfying portrait of Meredith nor any striking estimate of his place in literature.

GRANVILLE HICKS

The Navajo in Fiction

Laughing Boy. By Oliver La Farge. Houghton Mifflin Company. \$2.50.

THE American Indian has appeared frequently in American poetry and essays and occasionally as a minor character in fiction. He has never before, as far as I know, been the whole subject matter of a novel. Mr. La Farge has taken for his hero a Northern Navajo and for his heroine a Southern Navajo. His plot is the only plot of mental struggle conceivable and interesting with such characters—the struggle of the Navajo girl, educated in American schools, to return to her own people. Slim Girl, by nature deeply religious, had accepted Christianity and all its implications only to find that as a code of ethics it was always disobeyed by the whites. Unhappy and bewildered she returns to her people, but she has determined on revenge and this flaw in her character leads to her destruction. She will make a white man pay for her love and with his money she will rise above the very people she wishes to accept. She fears the decay and early aging which come to Navajo women who do the heavy work expected of them, and will not accept this as her future. Then she falls in love with Laughing Boy, a Northern Navajo and a noble and orthodox young Indian. Suddenly she is afraid of her past, but she determines again to use her wits after the fashion of the whites, and to keep her Navajo lover and force her white lover to grant wealth to both herself and her husband. Of

course in the end she is discovered and tragedy swiftly follows.

Such an ordinary plot would hold little interest did not Mr. La Farge know the psychology of the Navajo. The interest of the book and its richness lie in his familiarity with these people, their myths and customs. He has taken pains to familiarize himself with the works of Washington Matthews, the best authority on the Navajo, and many of the stories, the customs, the rituals, and the songs which form a natural part of the narrative are taken from Mr. Matthews's "Night Chant," "Mountain Chant," or "Navajo Legends." Along with this scientific knowledge of the Navajo goes familiarity with and a love for the Southwest. The book, accordingly, is not merely a novel but also a study of a folk, of their ideas of art, religion, marriage, and kinship. The contrast between the dignity of the Navajo and the natural purity of their outlook and the impurity of the whites would, probably, have been better emphasized had we known more of Mr. La Farge's whites, but as the latter are merely background and do not enter as important actors in the little drama, we are not entirely convinced of their villainy. Nor, I think, is the revenge motive in the heroine brought to the reader's knowledge soon enough. The book is almost finished before one realizes that Slim Girl has some reason for her duplicity toward her husband other than a desire for ease and money. These technical faults may be to some degree overlooked if one is willing to enjoy the book for its folk-lore.

EDA LOU WALTON

Two Views of Germany

Meet the Germans. By Henry Albert Phillips. J. B. Lippincott Company. \$3.

The New German Republic. By Elmer Luehr. Minton, Balch and Company. \$5.

THE general scope and purport of the book by Mr. Phillips may best be characterized by saying that it contains the observations of a tourist. In the author's own words: "This is simply My Book—a Me-Book About Germany: What I Saw, What I Felt, and How It Affected Me." We are asked at the outset to be tolerant and try to ignore the errors of his "facts" because he is not interested in facts as such; he merely wants "a few representative impressions from which you may form some idea of what the whole of Germany is like." Now it is all very well for the reader to be tolerant, but if the reviewer has any real mission, candor compels him to point out that in reading this book we do not get a representative picture of the life of Germany today; for while the author's meanderings lead him to many interesting cities and villages and through many by-paths that are not usually followed by tourists, the excursions invariably end in a restaurant or cafe where the meditations here recorded make all German life revolve about beer and sausages. That the writer is having the time of his life is evident, but it is not tax-burdened Germany that is here described; there is no hint of the distress of the shopkeeper and the farmer, or of the discouragement of the artist, or of the poverty and hard lot of the great toiling masses who make up the bulk of the population. One wonders whether the change from the bone-dry atmosphere of the States to the jolly life of the German cafe may not account for the numerous errors—sometimes three or four on a single page—that would otherwise be inexcusable. The imperfections are to be regretted because there is a place for a book such as this might have been, and it is written with a sympathetic enthusiasm that is commendable; but written, nevertheless for Main Street. It may lure George Babbitt from his comfortable sleeping porch to pay a visit to "Munich—City of the Amber Flood," or to Weimar in the hope of meeting the German

"Andy Gump"; but the thoughtful reader who goes beyond the illustrations—which are well selected and excellent—will scarcely care to meet the Germans if this description is to serve as an introduction to their life, characteristics, or social institutions.

Of a different scope and character is the work of Mr. Luehr, a book that holds the interest of the reader from start to finish because of the author's obvious mastery of material and the lucid and interesting style in which it is written. It is a comprehensive and authoritative account of recent German history, from the events that led up to the revolution, through the dark and tragic period of convulsions and rapid changes, to the triumph of the republic. The causes of the revolution, the struggle among the political parties, the Weimar Assembly and the making of the constitution, the peace treaty, reparations, the Ruhr invasion, inflation, and then the successive plans aiming at recovery and stabilization are all placed before the reader with telling force and conviction. But while Mr. Luehr has convictions of his own, and does not hesitate to express them, he does not distort the facts nor bend them to plead any particular cause. He writes Germany neither up nor down, but is guided in his narrative solely by the facts as he sees them and by the conduct of men and the course of events that have shaped the history of Germany during the last decade.

Mr. Luehr is in thorough sympathy with the republic, though not blind to its mistakes; he believes that "with all its faults, the institutions created by the Weimar constitution contain the necessary contents for the successful government of Germany." In conclusion:

The indifference and open suspicion to which the young German Republic was treated is one of the amazing facts of modern history. In an age confronted with the war breakdowns, the disillusion of war settlements, with the loss of faith in democracy, and the jubilant denial of liberty and personal rights, the German experiment had to show its vitality by asserting itself against opposition and crouching hostility. Through the blistering blasts of bolshevism, through the degradation of treaty and reparations, through the ferocity of fascism, German democracy stood as the strongest bulwark of free representative government on the European continent. Today when its enemies have receded into the background the republic stands firm, tolerant, and superior, ready to pull the country out from the last soft spots of the war mire.

This book is one of the best and most readable works covering this period that has thus far appeared in English. A select bibliography of recent works bearing upon the period, and an admirable index, add to its usefulness.

KARL F. GEISER

Books in Brief

The Black Venus. By André Salmon. Translated from the French by Slater Brown. The Macaulay Company. \$2.50.

This novel was published in France in 1920 and created a considerable stir, partly because of the brilliance of the writing and the absurd grotesquerie of the story, but chiefly because the author introduces under assumed names the friends of his youth in the first decade of this century. These include Picasso, Derain, Max Jacob, MacOrlan, the German poet Wedekind, and other pioneers of the days when the modern movement in art and letters, departing from the spirit of the nineties, set out to mold in new forms the eternal verities. Stringing his incidents together along the preposterous story-thread of the "Planter" of Montmartre—who dresses like a pirate, endeavors to cultivate in his ash dump of a yard exotic West Indian

AFTER MOTHER INDIA

Harry H. Field

So much has been said pro and con the accuracy of the books of Miss Mayo and Mr. Field that we are reproducing a series of comments on *AFTER MOTHER INDIA*. May we here quote Mr. Edward Thompson in the *Saturday Review*, who says that "Mr. Field shows up the pathetic feebleness of much of the reply to *MOTHER INDIA*,"—and the *Boston Transcript*, which finds Mr. Field's book "an excellent documentation of Miss Mayo's thesis, almost impossible to challenge."

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plants, and keeps for his "slave" a black dancing-girl—M. Salmon paints in words modernistic pictures of artists and poets, and also of the beggars, soldiers, urchins, and small trades-folk who surrounded them and helped to form their lives and their art. In addition to the celebrities the reader meets Mumu, the male courtesan in love with his own body; the tragic child Leontine and her drunken grandmother; Amédée, the stool pigeon, factotum on the "Plantation," who has a head like a crumpled ball of newspaper; the corrupt Martha, and her absurd husband who combines the careers of clerk and "fleshly" poet. Over the whole the author pours his sardonic humor and scorn. The book has a hard luster which, however, is not entirely impervious to thrusts of sadness and pity. It is unfortunate that the many snatches of song and verse have lost their charm in the translation.

Gardens of This World. By Henry B. Fuller. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50.

The tour which the Chevalier of Pensieri-Vani and the Seigneur of Hors-Concours make through Spain, around the borders of the Mediterranean and the Adriatic, and back to Paris by way of northern Italy is as allegorical as the two travelers' names. It is an adventure of age with youth, of the Latin tradition with the American innovation, of unassertive appreciation with untutored acquisitiveness. It is a pleasantry, sophisticated and cultured, full of wit, satire, and enjoyment. Dancing nuns and trans-Atlantic fliers make a romance out of a tourist's note-book. This is the next to the last piece of work Mr. Fuller finished before his death in July last year, and it is as fortunate an introduction to his neglected list of novels as it is a fitting penult to his achievement as a writer.

The Robber Band. By Leonhard Frank. Translated from the German by Cyrus Brooks. Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith. \$2.50.

This novel, first published in Germany over fifteen years ago, introduces another European author to American readers. It is particularly worthy of revival and translation because of the first half of the book, which is an extraordinarily realistic study of a group of working boys on both sides of adolescence. These boys form the "robber band" and find compensation for the harsh tyranny of home, school, and workshop in dreams of escape to the wild West and a life of adventure. As a temporary substitute for fighting Indians they organize marauding expeditions to bakers' shops and vineyards. One of the boys, "Old Hammer-fist," holds to his dreams after the others have outgrown them and until, in the adventure of art, he finds an outlet. There are passages of violence, coarseness, and brutality, for Herr Frank is a realist who does not shrink from any aspect of the lives of the laboring people of whom he writes. As a study of boys and young men in a harsh environment the book is a valuable and luminous piece of work.

The Sleeping Fury. By Martin Armstrong. Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$2.50.

Desire for passionate love may lie sleeping even in the quiet lives of conventional English women. Sometimes it bursts through the barriers of pride, family, caste, prejudices; sometimes it is thrust back into its place; in either case the result may prove tragic. Lady Marbury came upon love only after marriage, a marriage which up to then had been a happy one. She barely succeeded in repressing her wild impulse to throw over everything for the man she loved. Later, through the understanding gained from this bitter experience, she is able to do for her daughter what her own mother would never have been able to do for her. On this slender framework Mr. Armstrong has written his novel—the kind of novel which depends

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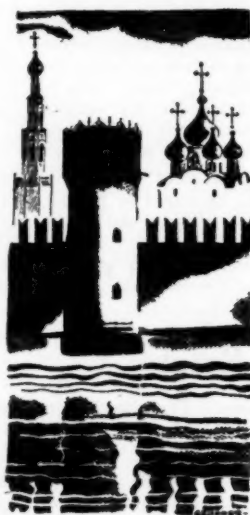
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for its success entirely on its power to throw light, subtly and delicately, into the secret places of human emotions. In its best chapters it approaches in excellence the fine studies of E. H. Young, a novelist who has received altogether too little praise in this country; but some of the key situations appear so unconvincing as to weaken the general impression of an otherwise fine book. Love at first sight needs more than the mere statement to convince; and the character of Lord Marbury, exquisitely touched upon in spots, falls in pieces before the author is through with it. The book is not a first novel but one is tempted nevertheless to call it "promising."

An Hour of the American Novel. By Grant Overton. J. B. Lippincott Company. \$1.

The Georgian Novel and Mr. Robinson. By Storm Jameson. William Morrow & Company. \$1.

Mr. Overton's purpose is frankly informative rather than critical. He crowds into a very brief space an account of the chief American novelists from Charles Brockden Brown to Joseph Hergesheimer and adds a running commentary to each. He is readable but elementary. Miss Jameson takes even less space to discuss with a hypothetical Mr. Robinson the virtues and defects of contemporary writers of fiction. The latter recognizes the intelligence and honesty of Virginia Woolf, Aldous Huxley, and the rest, but finds it impossible to say what their books are "about." His cicerone admits her inability to tell him but expresses the hope that some day these novelists themselves (or some younger successor) will find out.

The Roadmender. By Michael Fairless. E. P. Dutton and Company. \$1.50.

Mr. Fairless's reflections on life, the preparation for death, and death itself have been well known in England for nearly thirty years; their reappearance in this recent American edition only offers fresh proof of their timeless quality. The author became a stonebreaker on a country road, content to find his complete satisfaction in the simplest vista and humblest passerby. His observations are Franciscan in spirit, lowly, generous, loving. A meek good sense directs the peaceful record of his thoughts which glitter in the purity of the strong Christian faith.

Blake and Modern Thought... By Denis Saurat. The Dial Press. \$4.

M. Saurat's reference is not forward from Blake, as one might suppose from the title, but backward. His interest is in the sources of Blake's thought, and, as any reader of his previous volumes on both Milton and Blake would have reason to expect, he finds these sources at the bottom of the occultist well. The Gnostics, the Cabalists, and the Hindus are drawn upon for parallels with Blake which become as convincing as at first they are startling. M. Saurat is undoubtedly partial to the tradition which he here explores with a view of explaining Blake, but in large measure he vindicates himself, and at any rate he shows his poet in remarkably clear perspective.

John Donne, Dean of St. Paul's. Complete Poetry and Selected Prose. Edited by John Hayward. The Nonesuch Press. Random House. \$3.75.

Uniform except for color of binding with the Nonesuch one-volume Blake, this compact and beautiful edition of all of Donne that any reader needs entitles both editor and publishers to very high praise. Since the prose of Donne is so voluminous Mr. Hayward could not give it all, and indeed should not have given it all; but he has furnished excellent specimens of the "Paradoxes and Problems," the letters, the "Devotions," and the sermons; and has reprinted "Ignatius and His Conclave," a satire against the Jesuits, for the first time since 1652. The poetry, of course, comes first, in an authentic text.

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THE OPEN ROAD

Drama Magdalene

BEFORE the end of his sophomore year almost every budding writer composes something in verse or prose about a prostitute. Unconsciously aware that his technique is insecure, he naturally gravitates toward themes with an intrinsic interest and there is no story whose values lie closer to the surface than do those in the tale of the daughter of joy—especially if she happen (as in fiction she almost always does) to possess virtues which are vulgarly supposed to be incompatible with her profession.

The ostensible point of the tale will, to be sure, vary in accordance with the literary milieu of the writer. If his youth has been nourished upon the literature of the nineties he is almost certain to speak of Splendid Sins and to invoke the Implacable Aphrodite, while if, on the contrary, his thoughts have been given a sociological turn he will very probably seize the occasion to inveigh against the hypocrisy of society and not improbably reveal that the president of the Purity League was himself seen on a particularly dark night bending his furtive steps in the direction of the forbidden quarter. If, however, neither of these effects appeal to him, if, that is to say, he has given his first allegiance neither to Oscar Wilde nor to the less imaginative followers of Ibsen, then he is certain to belong to what, for want of a better name, we may call the Tout Comprendre school, with the result that his prostitute will stand revealed as not essentially different from her more fortunate sisters and that, like Camille, she will ultimately give up her own happiness for the sake of the man whom she has come to love too well.

But the more the story changes the more it is the same thing. The ironies are so obvious that one can hardly develop them without offering a sort of insult to the intelligence of the reader; and there is, besides, still another difficulty involved in the fact that the story has too much interest of a sort not primarily artistic or intellectual, and not even the frequency with which the prostitute has been discussed has served to deprive her entirely of her secret fascination. She stands for sin with a capital S; it is she who most conspicuously violates the most provoking of all the taboos and she who assists in the breaking of the one commandment of which everyone knows the number. Only the most abandoned can wholly escape a sort of irrational envy when her name is mentioned, and there are few so respectable that they do not feel a curiosity which they are glad to conceal under the guise of an artistic interest. This fact is, of course, highly advantageous to the young writer, since he may be perfectly sure that he will never completely bore his audience with *that* story, but the more accomplished craftsman avoids it for the same reason. Success is too easy and he has no desire to compete in a field where the veriest third-rater can produce the illusion of being almost as good as he.

Now Mr. Robert Sherwood is not a sophomore. On the contrary he is the author of several plays of which one, "The Road to Rome," was generally praised for its air of sophistication. Yet Mr. Sherwood is responsible for "Waterloo Bridge," now to be seen at the Fulton Theater, and in it he has written, with singularly few variations, the sophomore's story of the Fallen Woman and the Nice Young Man. From the moment when one sees the heroine take up her accustomed stand on the bridge after explaining to a companion how her effort to "go straight" has met with failure, one knows exactly what to expect and never once is one given an opportunity to find oneself agreeably wrong. The innocent and lonesome soldier is not

long in appearing and not long in mistaking her for the virgin of his innocent dreams. He proposes an honorable marriage with the promptitude which becomes him, and the prostitute, with the fundamental goodness of heart which becomes her no less, manages to escape after leaving a note behind. Only one scene still remains and if anyone in the whole theater doubted that the scene would be Waterloo Bridge once more and that there, under the moonlight, the two would be reunited, then that person must have been someone extraordinarily unfamiliar with both the stage and those movies which Mr. Sherwood professionally criticizes and from which he must have imbibed the idea that his story was worth telling again.

Some plays are unconvincing because they are obviously untrue to life; others for no other reason than that they have been seen so often that they inevitably remind one of the theater; and the present piece belongs to the latter class. For all I know, events something like those it recounts may have happened frequently and, in so far as I am able to judge again a bit of writing so much like countless others, I am inclined to suspect that the author has done a reasonably competent job. But a tale told so often inevitably lulls the faculties to sleep.

It is said that the English revue "Wake Up and Dream" (Selwyn) underwent a number of changes intended to adapt it more to American taste before it was presented at the Selwyn. Even in its original form it must, however, have been more in the style of our spectacular exhibitions than in that of Charlot's "intimate" entertainments. Yet it is, nevertheless, sufficiently different in the decor and the dancing to be refreshing. Jack Buchanan and Jessie Matthews are the featured performers, but the dancing of Tilly Losch and her corps is the finest thing in the show. As a whole it belongs with the very best current entertainments of the sort.

A new Dance Repertory Theater (Maxine Elliott's) is celebrating its opening by a series of eight recitals in which Martha Graham, Tamiris, Doris Humphrey, and Charles Weidman are presented. The art of Miss Graham, though very widely acclaimed, seems to me to be almost too slight to fill a stage, but the vivacity, strength, and fire of Tamiris are electrifying.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

Films As You Were

ACURIOUS change has come over Hollywood within the space of a single year. Last winter when the film producers decided to take a plunge in the production of talking pictures, Hollywood was all in a state of turmoil as it peered anxiously into the future and made frantic efforts to adjust itself to the new conditions. Today, to judge by its recent films, it must be again enjoying the comfortable feeling of restored stability, in fact, of being back where it was before all this rumpus began. There is indeed something almost uncanny in the ease with which the new medium has been turned to the old uses and the whole industry placed back on its accustomed rails. After all the talk about the revolution that the talking picture was going to make in the art of the cinema, one is startled to find that the Hollywood talkie of today is barely distinguishable from its familiar silent predecessor. To be sure, subtitles have given place to spoken dialogue, but in refutation of the early fears that dialogue is bound to slow up action, one finds the talkie just as fast moving as the silent picture ever was. Side by side with this undeniably positive achievement Hollywood has succeeded in retaining practically all the other features which characterized its typical product. In spite of the Russians and the Germans, it still glories in the straight photography

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But even on the existing popular level of Hollywood pictures there are degrees of quality and some established standards of competence. It is by bearing in mind these standards that one can at all comment on the recent crop of pictures on Broadway. Choosing the most notable among the latter, it is possible to say that "The Virginian" (Rialto) is quite up to the standard of a good Hollywood "Western," with perhaps a little more respect for the realities of the life described than is usual in this highly conventional but entertaining genre; that "The Mighty" (Rivoli) is as thrilling a drama of the underworld as a story of a gunman reformed by the love of a respectable young lady and enforcing the law against his old associates can possibly be; and that "The Laughing Lady" (Paramount), which attempts a picture of society life, is rather more deliberate and heavy in the mechanics of its plot than can be acquiesced in even by the movie-trained credulity.

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Madame Sun Yat-sen Keeps Faith

By RANDALL GOULD

A CHINESE attached to the present Nationalist Government once called upon Madame Sun Yat-sen at her green-shuttered house in the French Concession and said, in effect: "If you were anyone but Madame Sun, we would cut your head off." And she replied, smiling cheerily at her sullen visitor: "If you were the revolutionists you pretend to be, you'd cut it off anyway!"

After only four brief years, Dr. Sun Yat-sen has already been elevated to the status of a Chinese saint whose doctrines, like those of Christ, are excellent to use as wall mottoes but "too impractical" for serious guidance in the workaday world. Madame Sun's intransigence lies in her refusal to believe that Dr. Sun's ideas will not work. The peculiar obnoxiousness of this attitude lies in the fact that she is not merely a sorrowing widow, but in her own right a staunch individual who is keeping the words of Dr. Sun alive.

Fully to understand the reasons why Madame Sun as a Left-Wing leader is particularly harassing to the present decidedly Right-Wing government, it must be borne in mind how closely she is linked with that government by ties of blood. First of all, she is the sister of the former Soong May-ling, now Madame Chiang Kai-shek, wife of the President of the State Council. Likewise is she the sister of Soong Tse-woo, Minister of Finance and close to Chiang himself in importance. She is sister to Madame H. H. Kung; Kung is Minister of Industry, Commerce, and Labor, as well as being a direct descendant of Confucius. Sun Fo, only child of Dr. Sun and at present Minister of Railways, is Madame Sun's step-son. Against all these and the things they stand for Madame Sun set herself firmly in a statement issued in Hankow on July 14, 1927, and she has never once since that time stirred from her position. The statement began thus:

We have reached a point where definition is necessary and where some members of the party executive are so defining the principles and policies of Dr. Sun Yat-sen that they seem to me to do violence to Dr. Sun's ideas and ideals. Feeling thus, I must dissociate myself from active participation in carrying out the new policies of the party.

In the last analysis, all revolutions must be social revolutions, based upon fundamental changes in society; otherwise it is not a revolution, but merely a change of government.

The statement then pointed out that Dr. Sun's third vital principle, that of the "livelihood of the people," was at stake in the existing crisis, and it was emphasized that Dr. Sun had felt this principle to be basic in the revolution.

In this principle [said Madame Sun] we find his analysis of social values and the place of the laboring and peasant classes defined. These classes become the basis of our strength in our struggle to overthrow imperialism, cancel the unequal treaties that enslave us, and effectively unify the country. These are the new pillars for the building up of a free China. Without their support the Kuomintang, as a revolutionary party, becomes weak and chaotic and illogical in its social platform; without their support, political issues are vague. If we adopt any policy that

weakens these supports, we shake the very foundation of our party, betray the masses, and are falsely loyal to our leader. . . .

We must not betray the people. We have built up in them a great hope. They have placed in us a great faith.

And there is a bit about the background of Dr. Sun:

Dr. Sun was poor. Not until he was fifteen years old did he have shoes for his feet, and he lived in a hilly region where it is not easy to be a barefoot boy. His family, until he and his brother were grown, lived almost from hand to mouth in a hut. As a child he ate the cheapest food—not rice, for rice was too dear. His main nourishment was sweet potatoes.

Many times Dr. Sun told me that it was in those early days as a poor son of a poor peasant family that he became a revolutionary. He was determined that the lot of the Chinese peasant should not continue to be so wretched, that little boys in China should have shoes to wear and rice to eat. For this ideal he gave forty years of his life.

Yet today the lot of the Chinese peasant is even more wretched than in those days when Dr. Sun was driven by his great sense of human wrongs into a life of revolution. And today men who profess to follow his banner talk of classes and think in terms of a "revolution" that would virtually disregard the sufferings of those millions. . . .

In giving out the Hankow statement Madame Sun was doing a hard and dangerous thing which meant not only a risk of life—which would mean little to a woman of such caliber—but also the breaking of family ties and a generation of great enmity. Almost two years of voluntary exile followed the issuance of the Hankow declaration. Then in Berlin on May 6, 1929, Madame Sun announced:

I am proceeding to China for the purpose of attending the removal of the remains of Dr. Sun Yat-sen to the Purple Mountain where he desired to be buried.

In order to avoid any possible misunderstanding, I have to state that I emphatically adhere to my declaration made at Hankow on July 14, 1927, in which I announced my withdrawal from active participation in the work of the Kuomintang, on account of counter-revolutionary policy and activities of the central executive committee. . . .

It must therefore be abundantly clear that my attendance at the burial will not mean and is not to be interpreted as in any sense implying a modification or reversal of my decision to abstain from any direct or indirect work of the Kuomintang so long as its leadership is opposed to the fundamental policies of Dr. Sun; namely, the policy of effective anti-imperialism, the policies of cooperation with Soviet Russia and the Workers and Peasant policy. When these policies were the moving forces of the revolution we made rapid progress toward the realization of the principles of the party. Now that the three policies have been discarded, our party has again become the tool of militarists and counter-revolutionaries. . . .

In spite of her absence from the country, Madame Sun had been elected to the central executive committee of the Kuomintang at its hand-picked congress of last spring. Upon her arrival at Peiping to start the long funeral journey

from the Western Hills to the new mausoleum just outside the city walls of Nanking, Madame Sun made it abundantly clear that she had no intention of lending her name and reputation to the government or party. Keeping herself apart even from members of her family, she went through with the long and trying ceremonials, saw the casket safely deposited in its million-dollar resting place, and returned to her house in the Rue Molière in Shanghai. For some time she maintained silence. Then, on August 1, she fired a shot which would have echoed throughout the country had not suppression intervened. This took the form of a telegram sent to the Anti-Imperialist League in Berlin on the occasion of the international anti-war day. In view of the Sino-Russian tension, the message was timely to say the least. "Untimely" appears to have been the word favored by various frenzied callers who presently came to ask repudiation, retraction, or at least a promise to be good in future. The telegram in question read:

While the oppressed nationalities today form a solid front against imperialist war and militarism, the reactionary Nanking Government is combining forces with the imperialists in brutal repressions against the Chinese masses.

Never has the treacherous character of the counter-revolutionary Kuomintang leaders been so shamelessly exposed to the world as today. Having betrayed the Nationalist revolution, they have inevitably degenerated into imperialist tools and attempted to provoke war with Russia.

But the Chinese masses, undaunted by repression and undeceived by lying propaganda, will fight only on the side of revolution. Terrorism will only serve to mobilize still broader masses and strengthen our determination to triumph over the present bloody reaction. . . .

This message was at first ignored locally. English-language papers of Shanghai felt that they had had enough of fighting with the government; one of the leading British-owned dailies was barred from the mails; they saw no reason for stirring up another row. A distorted version, translated from the Japanese and portraying Madame Sun as advocating a terroristic policy, finally appeared in one British paper which ignored a true version sent in as correction. The Chinese press took no chances with any version. But government officials and party chiefs soon learned of the latest statement. Their emotions, if rumor be true, were far from uniform. Some apparently felt a sympathy they did not dare express publicly. Others were furious. When efforts were made to distribute the message in Chinese in the form of leaflets, the distributor was arrested. Some one threw handbills off the roof of the large Sincere Company store on Nanking Road, and when police found that the bills contained the offending statement in Chinese they developed a lively curiosity as to the identity of the distributors. Madame Sun herself said: "I feel good inside"—touching her bosom—"since I sent that telegram. It was necessary to express myself. What happens to me personally as a result is not important."

Although her house is watched, although visitors to it are followed, although the tick-tacking of her typewriter at night has been mistaken for "a secret wireless to Moscow," Madame Sun is serene and without bitterness or dejection. Her feeling today is the feeling of two years ago, when she wrote: "There is no despair in my heart for the revolution. My disheartenment is only for the path into which some of those who had been leading the revolution have strayed."

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